

The Architect's Newspaper

June 2022

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NOMA's professional development program connects HBCU students with firms page 15

Samuel Stein remembers the "revolutionary urbanist" Peter Marcuse page 21

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100% Organic

An exhibition at The School of Architecture—the first at the institution's new home at Arcosanti—unpacks the tricky meaning of a historic Wrightian term. [Read on page 18.](#)

SOMEPLACE OLD SOMEONE NEW

An on-the-ground account of building a work by Pritzker Prize winner Francis Kéré in West Africa connects architecture to larger geopolitical rumblings. [Read on page 30.](#)



METABOLIZED

In Tokyo, deconstruction of Kisho Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Tower has begun. Contributors share their remembrances of an iconic building that never really worked—and in doing so, changed the architecture world. [Read on page 35.](#)

Can Architects Learn from Generative Art?

On the main east-west drag in Marfa, Texas, the Art Blocks house/gallery sits between an upscale prix fixe restaurant and a church. With four bedrooms, three baths, a large yard, and a freestanding garage, it's a fairly large house for the town. It would be a rather inconspicuous one were it not for the large mural painted on the north wall of the garage, composed of bright colors and wavy abstract figures floating against a whitewashed wall. Although hand-painted by the artist Tyler Hobbs, the mural is part of a series of abstract computer-generated artworks called *Fidenza*, a set of 999 unique two-dimensional graphic compositions stored as JavaScript code and rendered using a web browser. The name might sound familiar to those who have been following the nonfungible token (NFT) art craze this past year. [continued on page 66](#)

AN FOCUS

Windows, Walls & Doors

[Read on page 40.](#)



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New Voices of Care



In July 2020, artists Tijay Mohammad, Sophia Dawson, and Patrice Payne created a Black Lives Matter mural in New York’s Foley Square. Justin Garrett Moore, as executive director of the city’s Public Design Commission, oversaw the creation of this and seven other murals that summer.

When the word “care” comes up in an architectural context, the typical association is to healthcare, or, more precisely, hospitals. But to read the three articles in this issue written by our New Voices in Architectural Journalism fellows, it’s clear that we must stake out a more expansive definition of what architectural care, or caring architecture, might be.

The New Voices fellowship itself is a mentorship-based program developed by *The Architect’s Newspaper* and the Pratt Institute School of Architecture whose mission is also care-related: to cultivate diverse young voices in the field. Announced in February 2021, it has roots that go back to our nation’s most recent moment of racial and social justice reckoning, the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police and the protest movements that followed in its wake. In June 2020, *AN* cofounder and publisher Diana Darling, along with our editors, published a statement in this column promising to address the paper’s blind spots when it came to acknowledging and supporting BIPOC perspectives. “Too often,” the statement reads, “architectural media proliferate the same voices and permit the same omissions, and we pledge to avoid any such missteps going forward.”

AN moved quickly to make good on its word, inviting more people of color to contribute articles, speak at our events, and serve on our award juries, as well as endeavoring to bring more coverage to the architecture produced by minority practitioners. However, it was clear that we could take a more proactive role in cultivating the next generation. Around this time, Darling and Pratt School of Architecture dean Harriet Harriss agreed to partner on the New Voices fellowship. Harriss, who is from the U.K., was keen on developing at Pratt a program along the lines of New Architecture Writers, an initiative created in 2017 by Phineas Harper and Tom Wilkinson with the London-based Architecture Foundation and *Architectural Review* that helps people of color and the underrepresented build journalistic skills, editorial connections, and a critical voice. *AN* had the platform as well as the expertise to ensure that the results of any such mentorship was impactful.

To select the fellows, who were drawn from interested parties in the BArch and MArch programs at Pratt, we assembled a jury that

included design critic and educator Shumi Bose; scholar, educator, and activist Sharon Egretta Sutton; and architectural designer Bola Lasisi-Agiri. They selected three students to participate: Ekam Singh, Catherine Chattergoon, and Monty Rush. These New Voices worked closely with me and executive editor Samuel Medina as well as Pratt visiting assistant professor Julia van den Hout and professor of media studies Jayna Brown to develop and refine their pitches before reporting and writing the articles you will read in this issue, which are the first of two assignments they produced during the 2021–22 academic year. Their second pieces will appear in *AN*’s July/August issue.

For this first round, we let the students follow their own interests, only offering guidance on how best to pursue and execute them. The outcomes, which address our cultural moment as well as how this generation perceives architecture, are telling. All three writers focused on some aspect of care, often with quite tenuous ties to what one might consider more bedrock architectural concerns, such as form or tectonics. Chattergoon, for example, interviewed urban planner Justin Garrett Moore, inaugural officer of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s Humanities in Place program, about his proposal for a “Department of Care” (p. 10). Rush explored the fraught legacy of Paul Rudolph’s buildings, which have met with the wrecking ball in extraordinary numbers, and spoke to groups that have taken stands to protect them and foster “a culture of care toward what has already been built” (p. 14). Singh examined gurdwaras, Sikh places of worship, which are defined more by the *seva* (selfless voluntary service) performed within their walls, typically through the provision of meals for all regardless of religious affiliation, than the form those walls might take (p. 16).

It’s heartening to see a sincere focus on care from these New Voices, though not surprising. After all, they’re inheriting a planet and a society that have been battered and bruised by mistreatment. Let’s hope they represent deeper generational currents that are powerful enough to turn the tides of humanitarian and environmental injustice.

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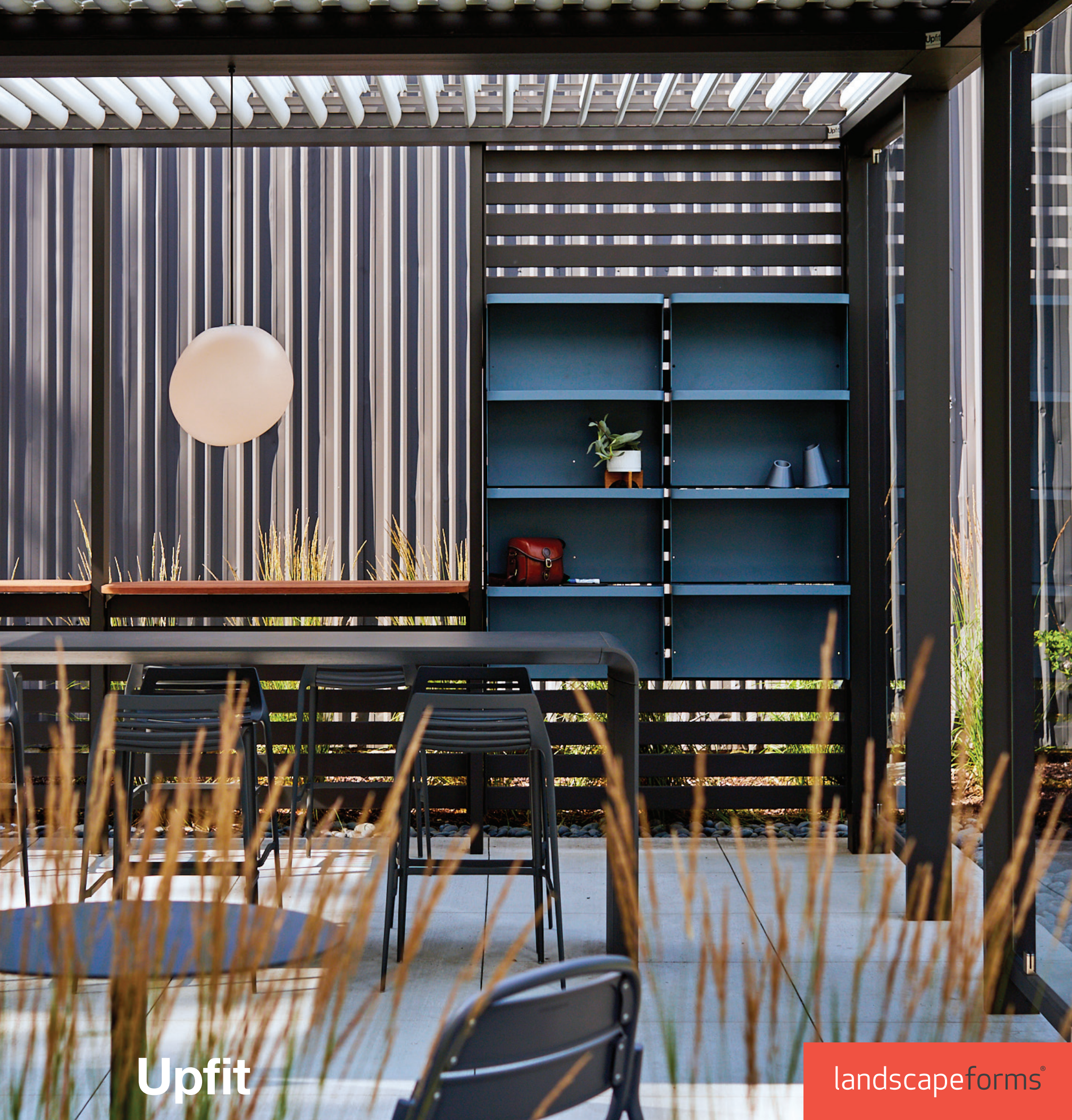
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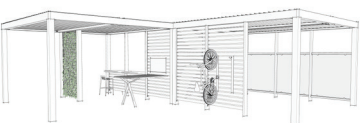
Correction

In the May 2022 issue’s Studio Visit, Stephanie Davidson of Davidson Rafailidis was listed as an instructor at the University of Toronto. That was a prior visiting professor role; she is currently an assistant professor at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University).



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Crow Over It

Morphosis unveils renderings of the Crow Museum of Asian Art at the University of Texas at Dallas, now under construction.



A lobby view of the future Crow Museum of Asian Art

Last month, the University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas) broke ground on a large campus culture district that will include two art museums and a performance hall.

Designed by Morphosis, the two-story, 68,000-square-foot Crow Museum of Asian Art will be the first part of the Edith and Peter O'Donnell Jr. Athenæum. In subsequent phases, the Crow Museum will be joined by a two-story, 53,000-square-foot performance hall, and, lastly, a two-story, 50,000-square-foot museum dedicated to the traditional arts of the Americas. These all sit on the western corner of the development, while a sizable 1,100-space parking garage occupies the east side. Important given the hot Texas climate, each building's second floor will be larger than the first, creating shaded overhangs for hanging out, studying, and outdoor performances. Each structure will also be clad in 3D white precast concrete panels for a very swoopy Morphosis-like finish.

According to university officials, the school doubled down on its arts focus eight years ago, when the same Edith O'Donnell for whom the current project is named funded an art history research institute. Its leaders envisioned the Athenæum as a center for art, literature, and learning that will better connect UT Dallas to both the Dallas Arts District and the communities that abut the university.

The Crow Museum's collection holds over 1,000 works from East and South Asia, spanning the centuries between ancient and contemporary eras, plus a small library.

The new building will house the second location for the Crow Museum and feature 16,000 square feet of flexible gallery space, art storage, seminar rooms, a conservation lab, administrative offices, and the Brettell Reading Room, which will feature the personal library of the late Rick Brettell, an art historian and prominent figure in the Dallas arts community who served as founding director of the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History.

"Morphosis is pleased to partner with The University of Texas at Dallas for this important project, giving us the opportunity to help shape the university's bold vision for the arts on campus," said Arne Emerson, Morphosis partner and the design partner on the project. "The O'Donnell Athenæum will transform the UT Dallas campus with buildings and open spaces for the visual and performing arts that will allow both students and the surrounding community to experience the convergence of art and architecture in ways not previously possible at the university." Following an international search, in 2019 UT Dallas selected Los Angeles-based Morphosis to master-plan and design the Athenæum's buildings.

The project is supported in part by a \$32 million gift from the O'Donnell Foundation. Phase 1, which includes the second location of the Crow Museum of Asian Art, will open in spring 2024. The concert hall debuts in phase 2, with the folk art museum arriving in the third development phase. **Audrey Wachs**

Eavesdrop

Think Like You Are Lost in the Forest

Bruce Mau wants to do nothing. If that doesn't work, he'll redesign everything.

On Friday the 13th under a nearly full moon during a buzzing tenth-anniversary edition of NYCxDESIGN, the city's cognoscenti gathered for a packed screening at the Angelika Film Center on Houston Street. The cause for the hubbub (choreographed by PR firm Novità) was *Mau*, a new documentary about legendary designer Bruce Mau by Australian filmmakers (and twin brothers) Benji and Jono Bergmann. *Mau* tells the story of the designer's career, from his mining town upbringing in Sudbury, Canada, to a stint at Pentagram to his breakout role as Rem Koolhaas's collaborator on *S,M,L,XL*, the landmark architecture book/brick published in 1995. Mau's abilities landed him increasingly large-scale commissions: branding work for Coca-Cola, a redesign of the processional experience within the holy city of Mecca, and a reimagining of the entire country of Guatemala under the slogan of *¡GuateAmala!* (The last two items weren't realized.) Such vision powered his *Massive Change* exhibition—installed in Vancouver, Toronto, and Chicago—and led to the founding, with wife Aiyemobisi "Bisi" Williams, of the *Massive Change* Network, to which Mau devotes his full attention. (The Toronto design office that bears his name remains active.)

Bjarke Ingels, who appears in the film, moderated the Q&A after the screening. Earlier, he dropped by the pre-event reception at the nearby Poltrona Frau showroom; dressed in a space-age metallic gold jacket, Ingels greeted Mau, clad in all black, save for his shiny teal shoes. The phones, including Mau's, came out for selfies and snaps. Mau may have been the star of the night, but Ingels was its starchitect.

Organized around Mau's 24 Principles for Designing *Massive Change*, the film showcases his superhero ambition. It's clear Mau is a driven individual who puts his heart and soul into every project he takes on. No longer satisfied with change alone, he is urgently working to create Massive Action. Today, Mau seems uninterested in design as a service industry but instead seems committed to design as a means of communication that can transform society at large.

During the Q&A, Ingels spoke about Mau's influence on him, explaining that *S,M,L,XL* came out during his first year in architecture school. He joked that in its early years, BIG "stole a ton of shit" from Mau's office, including a Christmas party PowerPoint presentation and the use of movable pinup boards. "[The boards] tend to make the studio look a lot more messy, but it also means that you can be constantly surrounded by all of the [office's] current knowledge. It's always there as evidence, and it attracts conversation and criticism and other spontaneous insights," Ingels said. Perhaps more substantively, his Masterplanet scheme to redesign the earth seems, on some level, to be indebted to Mau's *Massive Change* project.

Mau is the first film the Bergmann brothers have made together, and they too were influenced by their subject. One of Mau's principles is, "Think Like You Are Lost in the Forest"; the brothers cited it as a creative provocation that they still use today. Benji even quoted Mau's philosophical definition of the work of designers: "Design is the controlled release of information over time."

Despite his stature as a visionary, Mau has also contradicted his rich insights. Early on in his career, he received an invitation to redesign MoMA's graphic identity, but turned it down, saying that nothing could be better than the iconic word mark set in Franklin Gothic. Reflecting on that decision at the event, Mau said that his "preference is to do nothing. If I can get away with it, that would be my advice—it's usually not possible, but that would be my preference."

The conversation eventually turned to design as a systematic enterprise. This is problematic for Mau because "we invented this idea that if we can't resolve it in our system, we're going to put it outside of the system, and we're going to call it an externality." His example was the exhaust from your car; it's an externality because someone else deals with its consequences. This no longer works, Mau said. "We very intentionally designed it that way, and it allows us to do absolutely horrendous things in the world. You can't say, 'It's not my problem, it's your problem.' It's *our* problem." For Mau, what's needed isn't change, but action.

Energized, the crowd spilled out onto Houston Street. Some landed at an after-party in a Soho penthouse, whose two glass folding doors were thrown open to a private terrace overlooking cobblestone streets with a view of Lower Manhattan, a pleasant panorama to contemplate while absorbing the dim sum spread and open bar. The moment felt like a return to normal after two-plus years of pandemic precautions, though muddled by the world-altering crises addressed by the evening's subject matter.

Deep into the merriment, Kyle Bergman, founder and director of the Architecture & Design Film Festival, rallied the revelers around Mau to solicit additional words of wisdom. Earlier, Mau had revealed that part of his current work includes the task of redesigning democracy. Braced against a marble tabletop and illuminated by tea lights, he recounted the clear threats posed by the rise of conservatism worldwide and the need to respond with antifascist efforts to reach those who have become disillusioned. Design, in the service of good politics, could help tilt the balance away from uglier contemporary forces. For a moment, the clouds parted, and the enormity of the challenge—nothing less than the Fate of the World—stood before us. At least, until the speech ended and party talk resumed.

Paige Davidson

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Blocked In

Toronto's Zeidler Architecture and David Chipperfield Architects win bid to reimagine Block 2 in Ottawa.

Toronto-headquartered Zeidler Architecture, in association with David Chipperfield Architects (DCA), has triumphed in an international competition seeking transformative design concepts for Block 2, a roughly 2.4-acre redevelopment zone in downtown Ottawa directly opposite Parliament Hill in the heart of the Canadian capital city's Parliamentary Precinct.

Deemed the “most prestigious property in Canada,” Block 2 comprises twin vacant parcels and 11 existing governmental buildings of varying sizes. While some of the buildings in question are heritage-listed, all are “functionally obsolete” and ripe for revitalization and reuse. Per a formal announcement made by governmental department Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), the competition-winning vision from Zeidler Architecture and DCA “best responded to the complex and historical considerations of the area,” while also “demonstrating a high level of respect for and understanding of the significance of a future Indigenous Peoples' Space” at 100 Wellington Street, a long-vacant, 1930s-era Beaux Arts structure at the center of Block 2 as the first permanent United States embassy in Canada.

Block 2 will emerge from its reimagining as an “innovative complex that will meet the needs of a 21st-century parliamentary democracy in a way that respects our past while also embracing our future,” per the PSPC; the redesign will also “allow for the future consolidation of parliamentary accommodations,” including space for the Library of Parliament. In addition to office space for the Senate and House of Commons, a key component of the scheme is revamped retail space along the historic Sparks Street pedestrian mall.

As envisioned by the Zeidler Architecture- and DCA-led team, all existing heritage buildings at the site will be retained and repurposed, joined by a sprawling “People's Square” and a mass timber structure, the Garden Atrium, which will fuse together several existing buildings at the site while doubling as a shared indoor social space.

“Our proposal weaves together old and new to create a rich tapestry of past, present, and future,” the proposal explained. “In the spirit of responsible stewardship, existing structures are given fresh purpose. The value of this built heritage is unlocked by a new net-zero building and public spaces that represent a bold new architectural expression of Canadian identity.”

“The redevelopment of Block 2 will transform this mix of aging buildings into modern, inclusive, sustainable, secure and accessible accommodations for the Parliament of Canada,” Filomena Tassi, minister of public services and procurement, said in a congratulatory statement. “I truly hope that all Canadians will be able to visit and experience the chosen design for years to come.”

The May 16 announcement marked the conclusion of a closely watched competition overseen by the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada. It officially kicked off last spring.

Earlier in May, the PSPC revealed a blockbuster long list of 12 design teams tapped to participate in the competition; each was invited to submit initial design concepts following a request for qualifications process. Canadian firms were naturally well represented among the teams, and each included at least one domestic partner. In addition to Zeidler Architecture, they included, among others, Partisans, BDP Quadrangle, Diamond Schmitt Architects, Provencher Roy + Associés Architectes Inc., and KPMB, with the latter two being the only single-firm teams in the competition. The handful of competing teams led by non-Canadian firms (with Canadian partners) included the New York office of British practice Grimshaw Architects, Melbourne's Hassell Ltd., and WilkinsonEyre and Hopkins Architects, both headquartered in London. Besides DCA, which maintains studios in Milan, Berlin, and Shanghai, along with its London home office, non-Canadian long-listed firms of note were Foster + Partners, Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), Herzog & de Meuron, Behnisch Architekten, and Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

Fast-forward to just last month when a short list of six contenders was revealed. Joining Zeidler Architecture and DCA in the finalist ranks were Diamond Schmitt Architects with BIG, KWC Architects, and ERA Architects; Provencher Roy; Watson MacEwen Teramura Architects with Behnisch Architekten; WilkinsonEyre with IDEA Inc.; and NEUF architect(e)s with Renzo Piano Building Workshop. Each of the six short-listed teams then moved on to the competition's second stage, which entailed presenting refined design concepts to an independent competition jury and the Canadian public via a public presentation process. Later in April, the jury

convened to select its top three contenders and provide an “official recommendation” to the PSPC.

Ultimately taking second and third place in the competition were the NEUF architect(e)s/Renzo Piano Building Workshop and Watson MacEwen Teramura Architects/ Behnisch Architekten teams, respectively.

The Zeidler Architecture/DCA team is joined by two design firms acting as key project subconsultants: Montreal-based EVOQ Architecture, which will serve as a heritage adviser, and Two Row Architect in the role of Indigenous consultant.

“As Canadians and as architects, we recognize the privilege of being able to craft a design on a site with national significance. This is a rare opportunity, and our entire team understand the responsibility of representing the Canadian government and the Canadian people,” said Vaidila Banelis, senior partner at Zeidler Architecture, in a statement shared by *Canadian Architect*. “Our vision is purpose-led and people-led, uniquely Canadian and contemporary in style for a nation that is confident in itself and its future—a future that demonstrates the best that Canada can be: inclusive, accepting of difference, resilient and in harmony with nature.”

“Through this project we have sought to develop an urban and architectural response that is both respectful and radical, embracing the past and looking to the future, motivated by concerns for the environment and the ideals of community,” added David Chipperfield.

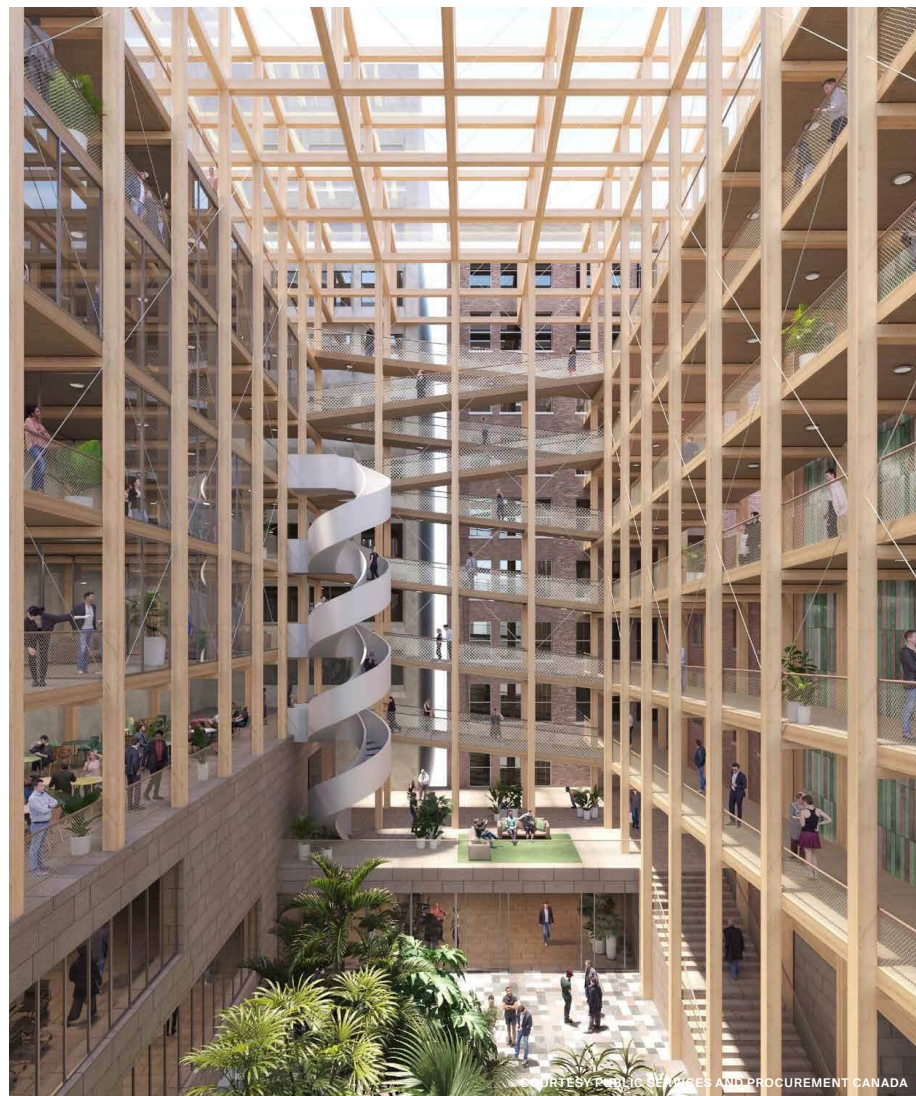
“We are grateful to the jury for recognizing the values of our scheme,” Chipperfield continued. “It has been a rigorous, stimulating and enjoyable competition and we look forward to working with the Government of Canada on the next stage of the process.”

As for that all-important next stage of the process mentioned by Chipperfield, it will entail Zeidler Architecture and DCA entering contract negotiations with PSPC to further tweak and refine the winning design concept; construction work is anticipated to kick off at the site in 18 to 24 months. The estimated cost of the Block 2 redevelopment project is roughly \$335 million (\$430 million CAD).

The selection of the Zeidler Architecture/DCA proposal was greeted with praise from Canadian critics, including the *Globe and Mail's* Alex Bozikovic. He called DCA a “brilliant choice” for a large-scale redevelopment project focusing on the sensitive commingling of old and new and noted that the Block 2 overhaul “promises to deliver the most interesting and thoughtful public architecture Canada has seen in a generation.” **Matt Hickman**

Below left: The scheme focuses on heritage preservation and creating new, inclusive, sustainable spaces in the heart of Ottawa's Parliamentary Precinct.

Below right: The Garden Atrium will tie the campus together.



9 News

Freshly Baked Plans

OMA and Library Street Collective reveal a scheme for a sprawling art space at a former commercial bakery in Detroit.

Contemporary art gallery Library Street Collective (LSC) is building upon its vision of reanimating Detroit's East Village neighborhood as a community-focused cultural nucleus for the Motor City. As announced in May, LSC, which itself is housed in the historic L. B. King and Company building in downtown Detroit, has acquired a long-vacant industrial building at 9301 Kercheval Avenue—previously home to a commercial bakery and warehouse—and is transforming it into a multifaceted arts hub featuring artist studios, galleries, offices for a pair of local arts nonprofits, and creative retail space.

LSC's reimagining of the 1900s-era structure into an arts center is the latest in a string of high-profile adaptive reuse projects led by OMA partner Jason Long, which include POST Houston (the first phase opened to acclaim last November) and the more recently announced Centre Pompidou x Jersey City. Joining Long from OMA's New York office are associate Chris Yoon and project architect Samuel Biroscak. Detroit's Metro CAD Group is serving as executive architect.

Dubbed LANTERN, the project comes just a few months after LSC announced its plans for the Shepherd, a buzzy 2.5-acre campus for the burgeoning East Village cultural district anchored by a 111-year-old Romanesque Catholic church that's being converted (with a distinctly reverent touch) into an arts and community space by Peterson Rich Office. Outside, the church grounds and adjacent vacant lots will also become a lush public green space designed by New York-based OSD. Other notable elements of the Shepherd campus are a planned sculpture garden named in honor of late Detroit artist Charles McGee, a public skate park/community space designed by Tony Hawk with McArthur Binion, an events lawn, a bed-and-breakfast housed in the old church rectory, and much more.

Meanwhile, a five-minute walk up McClellan Avenue from the in-the-works Shepherd campus, LANTERN will feature a total program area of 21,400 square feet. A considerable bulk of the decaying building's resuscitated footprint (about 8,500 square feet) will serve as the new headquarters for Signal-Return, a not-for-profit letterpress print shop currently based in Eastern Market, and PASC (Progressive Arts Studio Collective), a program of Detroit disability services program STEP that ranks as the first art studio and exhibition program in Detroit/Wayne County that exclusively supports adults with developmental disabilities and mental health differences. Together, the two nonprofits will anchor the OMA-revamped industrial space: PASC will gain spacious new digs set to include a new gallery, studio space, and workshops; and Signal-Return will populate a new East Village flagship location that will "provide an opportunity to further expand upon its programming, which includes hands-on workshops, exhibitions, educational partnerships, and the sale of prints, ephemera and gifts that focus primarily on the work of Detroit-based artists," per the press announcement.

"The core of our mission in East Village is focused on creating an inclusive community centered around the arts," said LSC co-founder Anthony Curis in a statement. The

two organizations, it went on, are "highly impactful nonprofits providing vital support and inspiration to the local arts community. We're thrilled to welcome them to the neighborhood."

"PASC and Signal-Return are both extraordinary organizations with a multi-faceted approach to community building through the arts," added Long. "To support and enhance their ambitions, we are both turning the building in on itself and out toward the neighborhood to bring a new density of activity and creative life to East Village."

Joining the new twin nonprofit headquarters at LANTERN will be a 1,000-square-foot gallery space, 5,300 square feet dedicated to artist studios, and 4,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space.

At the heart of the new cultural complex, OMA has envisioned a 2,000-square-foot outdoor public courtyard that will serve as an "accessible community space and activity condenser." The courtyard space takes advantage of an area of the existing building in an advanced state of disrepair, missing both an end wall and a roof. As a press announcement detailed, bricked and boarded-up sections of the building facade (and there are many) will be removed to allow for operable fenestrations, while windows in the gallery space will be extruded to serve as art vitrines.

Last but not least, on the corner of Kercheval and McClellan, a windowless expanse of concrete masonry units won't be gaining proper new windows: Instead, 1,500 holes will be drilled into the existing walls and filled with cylindrical glass blocks. At night, this "monolithic field of openings" will be illuminated, giving the reborn building the appearance of its namesake light source.

A project time line for LANTERN has not yet been announced. **Matt Hickman**



COURTESY OMA/LUXIGON



COURTESY OMA/LUXIGON

Top: The project is OMA's first in Detroit's East Village neighborhood.

Above: The firm will convert a rundown property into a community arts center.

Open

Lost in Music

Eavesdrop is full of custom-designed elements that support active listening with friends.



MAXIME LEMOINE

The custom bar comprises a grid of reflective mirrors and wooden ribs embedded with LEDs.

In realizing Eavesdrop, a new listening room, restaurant, and cocktail bar in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood, co-owner Dan Wissinger wanted to introduce New York to the historical lineage of Japanese listening bars, which began in the 1950s. To do so, he enlisted sound designer, and now co-owner, Danny Taylor for the job. "As much as possible, I wanted to use the idea of what the physical form of sound is," Taylor said when describing the main design goal for space. Sound is "obviously not a visual medium, so since there isn't anything to look at you have to create something that people can associate with, even if they don't know a lot about sound." To do this, Taylor drew on his background in designing audio systems for clubs and recording studios to create a sumptuous wooden interior composed of handmade elements, each strategically located to create different ambient levels of sound throughout the venue.

At Eavesdrop, which opened in March, materials were chosen carefully to help visually connect people to the moving sound waves that surround them. Those materials include birch plywood (commonly used for speaker construction), white poured-concrete terrazzo on the handmade bars and furniture pieces, cork (which offers some sound absorption), and flat surfaces. Custom pieces abound, including a wall of little mirrors gridded at variable depths opposite

the DJ station, which exhibits light-scattering characteristics similar to a disco ball. This reflective wall breaks up the sound waves that emanate from two large Swiss cheese-like Tom Danley SH60 speakers.

The speakers and diffusion wall are integrated into a surrounding interior of neutral beige, cork, and plywood undertones that define the walls, bars, and accents. Overhead, wooden ribs embedded with warm LED strips define the front bar area with dramatic flair before turning down to divide the wall of bottles, itself clad in mirrors, which allows patrons to see themselves in the space. After the grand opening earlier this year, Max Dowaliby joined the Eavesdrop team as head of its food program, which offers small plates and mixed drinks with a nod to Japan.

Eavesdrop maintains a strict 36-person capacity to establish a comfortable and relaxing listening experience. The idea is to come as you are and have an encounter with music in a space that is as democratic as possible. While a traditional Japanese listening bar forbids talking, Eavesdrop discards this precedent—meaning, the once-reclusive act of escaping into vibration is transformed into an environment where the act that inspired the bar's name is possible. Here, song and socialization reign supreme, as Eavesdrop has transformed its 1,000-square-foot space into a modern-day temple for music. **Paige Davidson**

10 News

In Care Of

AN talks to urban planner Justin Garrett Moore about his proposal for a Department of Care.

Justin Garrett Moore, inaugural officer of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Humanities in Place program, has long been an advocate for advancing social and spatial equity in the built environment. His proposal for a "department of care," first shared at the Center for an Urban Future's RE:NEW YORK CITY EVENT in fall 2021, asks those in the design disciplines to consider how rubrics such as "care," "repair," and "maintenance" can be built into a city's public spaces. As Moore noted in his address, both the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement made clear the connection between care and bodies-in-space. How might that realization inform new design practices? Catherine Chattergoon, a New Voices in Architectural Journalism fellow, spoke to Moore about how care can be a driver for reimaging civic responsibilities and spatial priorities.

Catherine Chattergoon: Let's start with the basics. What does "care" mean to you?

Justin Garrett Moore: Care is a part of everyone's lives in some form or another, be it their origins or their environment, their families or their community. The definitions that I've been contemplating most come out of studies by different feminists and feminist scholars—people like bell hooks or Joan Tronto. There's one definition that has stood out to me, which talks about care as being a wide-ranging set of activities. It's all that we do to steward and promote a healthy and good environment and experience for people, but also extending into things like the natural environment. It's important that care be understood as something that we are all able to do in different ways. Performing care keeps us from being divided into a particular segment of the society, into particular gendered roles, or as we saw during the pandemic, having certain people in the society—"essential workers"—bear the brunt of difficult work.

CC: When did you begin formulating the idea for the Department of Care? How does the project build on your prior experience at the Public Design Commission and your current work for the Mellon Foundation?

JGM: I worked in city government for many years and toward the end of that period was the head of city agencies. The Public Design Commission is responsible for the design review of all capital projects, all construction projects on public land or by public agencies in the city. In a big place like New York City, that translates to nearly \$10 billion every year and a really wide range of projects. We noticed that the conversations in the places and communities these projects were happening in wasn't necessarily around what the city was building, but what the city was maintaining and caring for long term. Even though we're far past the Robert Moses era that people associate with inequality being built into the city, we actually are still doing it every day in the present, and you can find evidence of this not only in how different communities are invested in but how care is planned and designed into these communities.

There was a lot of work around racial equity and injustice following the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and others.

Social justice and racial equity have this dimension of place and what we call "spatial justice," where and how spaces are treated differently. The idea for the Department of Care came from that—from knowing that one of the biggest engines of inequality in our city, and one of the most tangible and direct things that has to directly connect with the built environment, place, architecture, etc., was this issue of the maintenance and care of spaces long term. Around that time [in 2020], there were calls from social justice movements and Black Lives Matter to look at the city's budget and reallocate \$1 billion from the policing budget toward other uses. This often becomes a bit political, but the city's budget, which is our collective money, is a place to talk about what we value. People were suggesting that the money go toward youth programs and mental health, directly addressing things that tend to be more associated with policing and criminalization and crime in the city. But I wasn't sure we should be asking the police to do a lot of these things that they were being asked to do. Instead, I thought that we could take that \$1 billion to create a Department of Care.

CC: The relationship between care and maintenance is something you touched on in relation to NYCHA [New York City Housing Authority]. What does long-term care look like when considering underserved and neglected public housing?

JGM: The term "deferred maintenance" comes up a lot with places like NYCHA. The idea goes like this: At one point there was this big investment in the infrastructure of housing and neighborhood development with a wide range of social intentions. But that isn't right. There was the money to build that infrastructure, but there was never the money to care for it and to keep it. It's like what is said about wealth—it's not what you make, it's what you keep. You can make lots of things, but if it all goes out the door or gets lost, then there's no wealth. The same applies, really, for communities and spaces. It's not just what you make, it's what you keep.

With NYCHA, so much work and energy has been around figuring out how to address what is now a multigenerational legacy of disinvestment. The lack of care for these places is profound because the priorities tend to go toward new things, new housing, new development. Unfortunately, we see that lack of care at so many of these NYCHA sites. There's an acknowledgment that there are connections there, there are bonds. But then there's the challenge of how to redesign and reconfigure and care for a place while people are still living there and without stoking fears of displacement. People need their units rehabilitated. They need their buildings serviced. All this is directly connected to care. One exciting idea of the Department of Care was to identify ways designers and people doing work in and with a community can be a part of imagining what caring for a place is, how it would work, and how it connects to people and the things that they want to see in their community.

CC: Can we apply the rubric of care to other spaces? What could "care infrastructure" or "pedagogies of care" begin to look like?

JGM: "Pedagogies of care" is really important. If you take a step back, much of our educational and professional training is connected to a paradigm based on growth, development, economic productivity, innovation, etc. Just look at architecture school—all you're trained to do in school is to make something new. Even if you're in a preservation and rehabilitation program, it's still a project-based act that follows the premises on which the development industry is set up. Things like maintenance and care aren't valued that much. It's true that in school you're also likely to learn how to communicate well with someone like a developer or a government or someone in power and agency, or even in the kind of the planning side or urban design side, things like community engagement. But the framing tends to be "So how do you convince people to do what you want to do?" You don't learn how to talk to, communicate with, and design for someone like a maintenance person or a caregiver. Those things are not integral to what you learn in design pedagogy and practice. But there should be a shift toward other modes of thinking—how you organize and prioritize and value information, knowledge, responsibility, even the ethical side of things is there.

There should be a shift to bring in care as a consideration. Something like urban renewal and "blight" would never have happened if care had been a factor. The way you would have approached real issues of lack of investment and all that would've been entirely different. Thinking about the scale of urban renewal and its connection to issues of race and class, for example, what a difference a framing of care and maintenance could have made. Shifting the discipline's ethical responsibility away from *abstract* notions of health, safety, and welfare to people's *actual* health, safety, and welfare would be transformational, and this could carry out to other fields as well. For example, government would have to shift not just where responsibilities lie, but really where priorities lie. The idea is that care becomes rhizomatic and reaches every agency and department. The naming of the department is just so that people can have an idea that

it's a thing, but it would actually exist in different places to do the different kinds of work that are needed.

CC: The process of caring involves vulnerability. How can we hold ourselves accountable to being open? How do we continue to center the values that emerge when we work with care?

JGM: I think it's possible to try to pilot or test an initiative in different places that gives people something to respond to and learn from. Earlier in my career, I was in city planning during the Bloomberg administration. There was an idea we were floating that is now a commonly accepted thing, which is that public spaces in the city should better prioritize pedestrians. At the time, it was a radical, crazy thing to say that people who are walking or rolling, just moving around, would be the highest priority for urban spaces, and so the administration tested it out. They just got paint, and they went and reconfigured things and showed people that change was possible. They learned what worked and what didn't work about this sort of transformation, and they learned what was needed for that transformation to happen, for it to be sustainable over time.

Of course, to do that you would have to have the leadership and the will to try to demonstrate an idea, to be able to fail, to be able to hopefully have some successes and show how that would work. The power of that is that it doesn't have to be a huge thing; you can just test it. I've been telling people that with the Department of Care idea, because of everything that's happened in the past couple of years. There are connections being made, and people have seen some transformation, but it's important to again push and expand many different types of care work and make it present and visible for people so that they can see what works and see what doesn't.

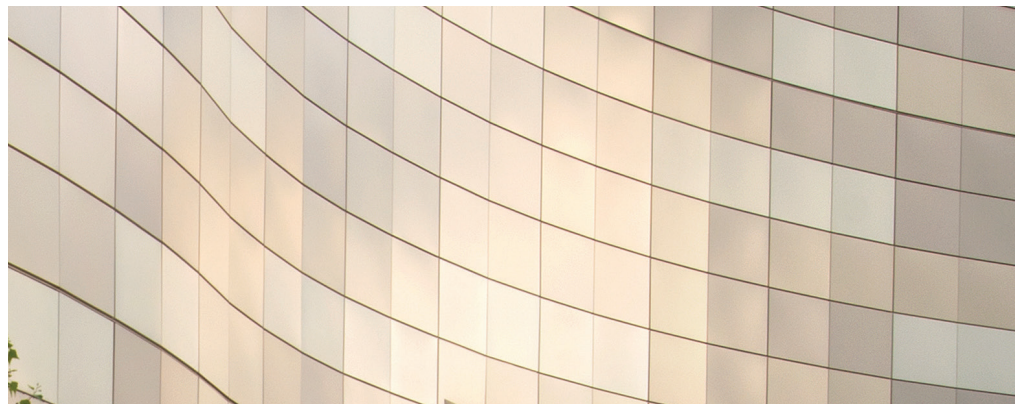
Catherine Chattergoon is a BArch student at the Pratt Institute School of Architecture. In 2021–22, she was one of three New Voices in Architectural Journalism fellows. The program was sponsored by Pratt and AN.



DARIO CALMESE/COURTESY ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

Prior to joining the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Justin Garrett Moore served as executive director of the New York City Public Design Commission. Before that, he was a longtime senior urban designer at the New York City Department of Planning.

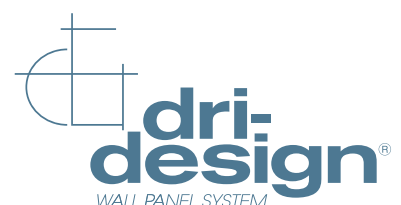
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Mum's the Word

The Adams administration promises it will make all sorts of improvements in New York's built environment—only it isn't ready to talk about any of it.

Judging by the halting responses of various press offices within the newly formed mayoral administration of Eric Adams to a basic question about its infrastructure priorities, I fully expect that in a matter of weeks New York City will collapse into a pile of fiery debris: Its bridges will fail; its subways will be permanently inundated by stormwater; and its residents, having taken to homemade rafts, will begin scavenging for food, water, and shelter. More patient, less alarmist observers suggest the mayor's staff simply don't know how to answer the question yet.

That said, clues to the intentions of the Adams administration for better governance can be found in a couple of places, including a plan for economic recovery released by the mayor's office in March, a two-pager shared by the Department of Transportation (DOT), and a trickle of information from other sources.

Suggestions offered by former mayoral staffers, scholars, and expert practitioners could also help guide infrastructure policy toward a more ecological, equitable, and beautiful city (if it's still standing). We gather from Thaddeus Pawlowski, who worked as an emergency planner for the city in Bill de Blasio's administration, that the former Mayor's Office of Climate Resiliency is being renamed the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice to combine several offices under a single umbrella. Crucially, the office will also be placed under the oversight of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which has substantial capital budgets.

The appointment of top-level officials hailed as smart and competent, such as Rohit T. Aggarwala as DEP commissioner, has also created a sense of optimism among outside observers like Pawlowski. (Initial missteps by the Adams administration, including the hiring of Bernard Adams as director of mayoral security, and the bulking up of police presence on public transit, were deflationary, to say the least.) However, none of these officials were made available to speak to *AN* after dozens of queries, nor were any current agency staff members, though three deputy mayors and an acting Department of Buildings commissioner spoke at a break-fast sponsored by the New York Building Congress in early April.

At the April 7 event, Deputy Mayor of Operations Meera Joshi was asked about the particulars of Adams's infrastructure bill. She responded with a series of questions. "Are we reconnecting communities? Are we thinking about equity? Are we thinking about resiliency?" Joshi said, adding, "There'll be everything from our broken highways and bridges that need help—the BQE—and there'll be things that have not traditionally been considered as part of infrastructure bills like a lot [of] our resiliency projects, lead pipe replacement, and, really, reconnecting communities: How do we reconfigure?"

On March 10, Mayor Adams released *Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent: A Blueprint for New York City's Economic Recovery*, a 63-page report outlining plans for pandemic relief through investments in neighborhood infrastructure, among other items. The report teases improvements to public spaces and a much-longed-for implemen-



Under Mayor Adams, New York stands to see improvements in transit and resilience.

tation of street-by-street cleaning across the city. The mayor should take the impetus for cleaning and reconfiguring the streetscape to mandate a regularized system for trash bins that would remediate the impact of garbage disposal on sanitary conditions, according to Lisa Chamberlain, communications lead at the World Economic Forum's Centre for Urban Transformation. "The fact that we don't have dedicated on-street bins for trash that are regularly picked up," she said. "This is not rocket science. There's nothing futuristic about this."

The economic recovery blueprint, co-signed by Maria Torres-Springer, appointed deputy mayor for economic and workforce development, will support small businesses by easing regulatory burdens and streamlining permitting processes, as well as setting up "one-stop shops" that will allow businesses to complete all of their filings in a single office, using online databases to fluidly improve interagency communication.

The initiative signals the smart use of new technology that Chamberlain hopes can be implemented on a wider scale to make city construction and services more efficient. She points out that for more than a decade companies like IBM and Deloitte have offered "command center-type tools" to integrate and visualize data across multiple agencies, as well as manage incidents

and requests, geolocate information, and oversee operations. "In order to break down those silos, you need to have very robust data sharing capabilities," Chamberlain said. "Machine learning can be involved so that you're not relying on humans to identify patterns or spot every potential problem. The data center can tell you, for example, that the pattern of flooding is repeatedly happening *here*."

In the past year, public transit has been a particular source of trouble for the city. A press liaison for the mayor's office indicated many of the major investments in public transit it expects to make will be controlled by agencies beholden to the state, overseen by Governor Kathy Hochul. Meanwhile, a two-pager on the mayor's priorities released to *AN* by a DOT press secretary offers a gloss of possible projects that could be funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Eligible projects include long-neglected bridges across the five boroughs—789 of them, according to the document—and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, which is dangerously in need of repairs.

"There are well-known infrastructure emergencies that are 50 years in the making, but if we're only thinking about those, then we're already falling behind on what's actually needed," Chamberlain said. "We're already ten years behind on electrifying transit. If all we can do

is make up for lost time on the 50 years, we're never going to get out of things."

Yet the mayor's economic recovery blueprint, the DOT two-pager, and Deputy Mayor Joshi all suggest that transit will be a priority of the Adams administration. There are proposals for electric vehicle street charging stations, improvements to greenways for bicycling, rail shipments, and Staten Island Ferry service. Additionally, the Vision Zero initiative to reduce traffic fatalities stands to be expanded through capital projects at major junctions in Manhattan (Delancey Street), Queens (Queens Boulevard), and Brooklyn (the Myrtle/Wyckoff Avenue pedestrian plaza).

Marc Norman, incoming associate dean of New York University's Schack Institute of Real Estate, told *AN* that these infrastructure investments could be tied to upzoned neighborhoods and increases in density near public transit. He said he anticipates the state legislature will allow the 421-a tax break to sunset, meaning that the government could reinvest the billions in new revenues into publicly subsidized midrise housing near public transit.

Pointing to Adams's enthusiasm for cycling, Norman suggested that the expansion of bike lanes is an effective measure for slowing traffic in neighborhoods. So are the COVID-era restaurant sheds, which also have the benefit of enlarging public space; these could be expanded, Norman suggested. "During COVID, the sidewalk sheds were all about restaurants, but really it's reconfiguring and rethinking the public realm," he said. "What if neighbors wanted to make a shed a garden plot or a butterfly habitat? I imagine we could take that flexibility we gave to restaurants for claiming street space to all sorts of other things."

The documents reviewed by *AN* also prioritize resiliency projects to protect against stormwater, such as the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project already underway. Pawlowski, who is managing director of Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation's Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes, looks ahead to a future depaved and renaturalized city. Drawing on principles pioneered by the landscape architecture firm SCAPE, Pawlowski argues for using wetlands, forests, and natural systems to absorb stormwater, as well as removing surface parking lots wherever possible. "We need to go back to the number one priority, which is to live better with nature and reintroduce natural landscapes into the way we manage our space, manage our stormwater, and create a connection between people and place, and people and each other," he said.

One of the essential functions of government is to communicate with the public and provide guidance regarding its policies, and assurance of its competence and transparency. Independent journalists covering the city are not unlike small businesspeople; we are, after all, dependent on the administration to provide swift access to information, as well as interviews with staff and public officials to give the public insight into its functioning. By the measure of its interactions with this publication, its initial steps are concerning. It has left itself a great opportunity to show improvement. **Stephen Zacks**



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Big Prey

Why can't Paul Rudolph's buildings catch a break?

To be a preservationist is hard. To be a preservationist for Paul Rudolph's buildings is even harder. Rudolph is often cast as the unluckiest architect of his generation, given how many of his buildings have met with the wrecking ball. The anti-Rudolph mood started while the architect was still alive, but it intensified after his death in 1997. The razings of the Burroughs Wellcome building in Triangle Park, North Carolina, and the Biggs Residence in Delray Beach, Florida, both in 2020, have put already anxious campaigners on high alert as to the fate of the Boston Government Service Center and other beleaguered projects.

Born to a Kentucky reverend in 1918, Rudolph studied architecture at Auburn University (then known as Alabama Polytechnic Institute) and, after a spell in the Navy building ships, obtained a master's from Harvard. Rudolph moved to Sarasota, Florida, and wasted little time in setting up his own office in 1952, designing modern, single-family homes that defined a new way of living. He produced buildings consistently through the 1990s, at which point he was recognized as one of the country's most important architects. The numerous projects he designed (more than 150 were realized, with around the same number unbuilt) were celebrated for their formal ingenuity and bold use of concrete, Rudolph's preferred material.

Given his reputation, why, then, are Rudolph's buildings so vulnerable to demolition?

There are a number of intersecting forces at play, from fluctuations in the economy to public tastes, that can lead to an older building being demolished. In Rudolph's case, an aversion to the associations tying Brutalism (the style often ascribed to his work) to urban renewal and ideas of government overreach, explains the tenor of the backlash. But more specifically, the lack of funding for the continued maintenance of Rudolph's buildings, which were often very large and required dedicated upkeep, has been a pivotal factor in demolition.

Timothy M. Rohan, a leading Rudolph scholar based at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, said that proponents of both preservation and sustainability would do well to foreground maintenance

in their campaigns. Creating and adhering to maintenance programs enables the interception of issues that might imperil a building's performance before they snowball out of control. "It's possible to preserve anything. You just have to have the will to do so," Rohan said. He suggested that incorporating maintenance into sustainable practices might be a way to overcome the fact that many Rudolph projects stand on plots that skyrocketed in value in the years after their construction. Unless a convincing case for landmarking *and* rehabilitation or adaptive reuse is made, land values will always win out.

The Twitchell Residence, built in the 1940s in Siesta Key, Florida, was demolished in 2007 after falling into disrepair. Like other Rudolph-designed homes of that time, the house promoted passive cooling in a wet, hot climate decades before such ideas were popular. But updated fire and residential building code requirements pushed the owners to sell the property, which sat on an attractive, expensive lot. Preservation arguments are even less likely to sway individual owners who may not want to be saddled with the responsibilities that come with caring for a significant piece of architecture.

Landmarking is useful but is not a sure way to preserve Rudolph's extant residences. In August 2020, the owners of the Biggs Residence all but tore down the house, retaining only the metal framing. They did so without alerting the city, which would have asked to review the demolition plan, as the property is listed on the Delray Beach Local Register of Historic Places.

Riverview High School, constructed in 1958 in Sarasota, was demolished in 2009. The original design considerations of brise-soleils and breezeways tailored to the subtropical climate did not contend well with the introduction of air-conditioning following a building renovation. Sealing the building caused mold issues that could not be resolved without additional costly renovations. Despite pushback from historians, architects, and local residents, the county school board didn't revoke the demolition order.

Still, that passion for architecture from communities and preservationists is exactly what can save endangered build-

ings. Rudolph's addition to Sarasota High School, completed in 1960 in a similar style to Riverview, was rehabilitated in 2015. In addition to reinforcing the structure and removing the asbestos stucco on the exterior, Harvard Jolly Architecture and local architect Jonathan Parks preserved the original breezeways. According to Rohan, the renovation would not have happened without the efforts of the Historic Preservation Program in Sarasota, which helped the school board recognize the importance of Rudolph's architecture and doubled down after the loss of Riverview. "The value of the buildings is tied to the sense of place and identity, and the value extends beyond the immediate financial gains of the building," he said.

The cachet of midcentury modern design has certainly elevated Rudolph's early work over his mid- and late-career work, which is often inaccurately labeled Brutalist. (The buildings from the 1970s on mark a return to steel and glass, albeit married to large massings.) Both criticized and applauded as a "difficult" style of architecture to digest, Brutalism, with its affinity for unadorned concrete, implacable forms, and expressive structural systems, draws mixed emotions from the communities that live and work inside these projects. Rudolph's municipal buildings are under even more public pressure than his other residential projects due to their high visibility and contextual ties to government entities. Rohan said that these buildings are often used as "financial and political footballs," particularly when administrations turn over.

After a 2011 flood, the Orange County Government Center in Goshen, New York, was slated to be restored. But the project was botched and resulted in the stripping of the building's multilevel interiors and the partial smoothing over of the exteriors to match a new adjoining structure. More recently in Boston, the Rudolph-designed Government Service Center is at risk of a similar disfigurement, if not outright demolition. In a bid to redevelop parts of the site, Massachusetts's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance has signaled that it is willing to pull down the Charles F. Hurley Building, a key piece of the multiblock project. Writing for AN,

local architect Chris Grimley defended the "radical vision" of Rudolph's broader scheme, which was only partially realized. That the complex is tied to the failure of the American welfare state is unfortunate, but that, he argued, is reason enough for its preservation. "Such an outlook," Grimley wrote, "celebrates all elements of urban history, including those we don't particularly find beautiful, for as history suggests, standards of beauty are not fixed in place but oscillate over time."

Architecture critic Kate Wagner laments the conversations that these real or pending demolitions often spark. Echoing Rohan, she finds that little effort is made to understand the richness of Rudolph's architecture; instead, more energy is poured into painting projects such as the Burroughs Wellcome building or the Government Service Center with a broad political brush. "These buildings fall prey to polemical arguments that modernism was a failure or that they were too ambitious for their time," she said. "It's just easier to say that they fall prey to time. Any single building can fail. We have to take care of what we put on this earth."

Encompassing ingenious little Florida houses and schools and unforgettable civic citadels, Rudolph's work still captures the imagination of many. Advocacy groups such as Docomomo have made inroads in spreading the cultural values of modern architecture more generally, while The Paul Rudolph Foundation and The Paul Rudolph Institute for Modern Architecture actively work to safeguard the architect's legacy. Through these efforts, and the thoughtful work of designers and clients, many are fostering a culture of care toward what has already been built, including Paul Rudolph's architecture.

Monty Rush is a BArch student at the Pratt Institute School of Architecture. In 2021-22, she was one of three New Voices in Architectural Journalism fellows. The program was sponsored by Pratt and AN.

Left to right: Burroughs Wellcome headquarters; Riverview High School; Sarasota High School; Twitchell Residence



A Cultural Add

NOMA's professional development program for architecture students at HBCUs is propelling the field forward.



TAKUDZWA TAPFUMA



COURTESY ZHETIQUE GUNN



COURTESY MELVALEAN MCLEMORE

Anzilla Gilmore (left), Zhetique Gunn (center), and Melvanean McLemore (right) founded the program in 2020, with two events held in the subsequent year. They hope it continues to grow.

Intentionality. Persistence. Commitment. These are key actions that come to mind if you ask how architects create institutional change and real diversity within their companies, according to Melvanean McLemore, Anzilla Gilmore, and Zhetique Gunn, the three cofounders of a new professional development program (PDP) for architecture students at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The trio are Texas architects and designers who recognized the need for equity in architecture through reframing how designers from HBCUs are viewed by the architecture profession. These women are currently building an accessible network supported by the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) to match AEC firms with diverse architecture students.

McLemore, Gilmore, and Gunn were all working in Houston when they cofounded the PDP in 2020. They were inspired by AN's June 2020 Trading Notes panel titled "Concrete Steps to Improve Racial Equity in the Architecture Workplace," which featured Jonathan Moody, CEO of Moody Nolan. (McLemore works in the firm's Houston office; Gilmore is the director of project management at Rice University's FE&P Department; Gunn is a designer at Perkins&Will in the Washington, D.C., office.) Moody advocated for increasing touch points between HBCU architecture students and architecture offices, as students from the seven HBCUs with a dedicated architecture program account for roughly 50 percent of Black and Brown emerging professionals in the field. HBCU students are often overlooked and underutilized after they graduate; many leave the profession to gain success in another field. Gilmore and Gunn graduated from Prairie View A&M, one of the seven HBCUs that grant a degree in architecture, and McLemore is an alumna of the University of Houston; while in school, she was one of only a few Black architecture students at the university. All three women were acutely

aware of the barriers and burdens that BIPOC architecture students face when entering the profession. They wanted to initiate the programming and mentorship to increase these key touch points for HBCU students.

After months of planning, the PDP started as a speed-networking event in 2020 open to all HBCU students, with over 90 students and 150-plus design professionals attending. A virtual career fair followed in January 2021, with 60 vetted students in their final years of school and/or programs requiring internships in attendance. These first two events were entirely virtual, which addressed a barrier to entry for BIPOC students that McLemore calls the "cost to be seen": a factor affecting attire, time and access, and networking capabilities for HBCU students seeking experience. From its initial programming, the PDP combated the "best and brightest" mentality in firms, which falsely justifies a lack of BIPOC representation through the assumption that HBCU students lack the talent and value of their non-HBCU counterparts. Firms often prioritize emerging professionals who are a "cultural fit rather than a cultural add," Gunn told AN, but the profession grows stronger when we celebrate the wealth of experience that HBCU students bring when we advocate for their representation at every level of the industry. McLemore, Gilmore, and Gunn knew that they could tackle these issues through a pipeline program for HBCU students to gain skills and visibility, to destigmatize their contribution to the profession. "We're vetting these diverse up-and-coming students and handing you the best and brightest," McLemore said. In the PDP's first year, over one-third of participants secured job opportunities. Two years in, the HBCU PDP has grown from a speed mentoring event to a multifaceted professional development program connected to NOMA and The NOMA Charitable Equitable Foundation.

With 88 students and 30 firms currently involved nationwide, the NOMA HBCU PDP is

open to any upper-level architecture student or recent graduate from one of the seven architecture degree-granting HBCUs, as well as any firm committed to diversity and equity. The PDP includes nine months of events (speed mentoring; a career fair; and seminars on the workplace, interview skills, and financial planning) followed by potential job opportunities and quarterly check-ins for a participant's first five years as an emerging professional. In partnership with NOMA, HBCU students have greater visibility, resources, and funding within a nationwide network of BIPOC designers. When Gilmore described the PDP, she said that every student is "making connections, building their networks, gaining the skills and confidence to succeed at their school and other local career fairs, and ultimately how to advocate for themselves in a profession that does not teach students how to do that."

The PDP's founders are optimistic about the future. With NOMA as an anchor partner, they hope to add staff, increase their grant program for students (which currently offers amounts from \$1,500 to \$2,500), and champion self-advocacy and professional growth in HBCU architecture students. They want these emerging professionals to find mentors who look like them as well as ones who don't. Jonathan Salley, a fifth-year Howard University student who was part of the 2020 cohort, noted that "[the career fair] was helpful because... I got stronger and better at expressing my personality, sharing my passions, and being more engaged." After her involvement in the program, Fikir Kebede, from the University of the District of Columbia, remarked that "the Annual HBCU professional development program [was] a great networking experience to find jobs, internships, and mentors."

The NOMA HBCU PDP fosters mentorship and self-advocacy through increasing touch points for HBCU students. The program provides the resources to transform a student's trajectory in the profession and establishes

more office cultures that thrive owing to a diversity of experience among employees. "It makes my heart warm to see this many students with such great work," said HBCU graduate Reginald Truxon, of Gensler D.C., following his professional involvement in the program. The PDP challenges students to invest time in networking and mentorship while simultaneously holding both architecture schools and firms, as stakeholders, directly accountable for making space and fighting for equity in architecture. From McLemore's perspective, "diversity and inclusion will come from equity. Focusing on the 'd' and the 'i' is box-checking... prioritizing [equity] is how you level the playing field." Firms that take on this call to action embody what Gunn refers to as "the design ethos they're speaking about" when they plug design and inclusion in the profession. The PDP asks us as architects to be intentional in shaping the people who create our built environment, persistent in our work to make architecture a career field that welcomes everyone, and committed to the mission of equity in design.

Caitlin Dashiell is a Houston-based designer and writer working in architecture and public art.

[Read more at archpaper.com](https://www.archpaper.com)

Spaces of Service

During the pandemic, Sikh temples have become a model for civic spaces.

In April 2020, an unassuming basement in Flushing, Queens, transformed overnight into a collective kitchen and dining hall, a food packaging hub, and a prayer hall. With help from community leaders, neighbors, and home cooks, the facility was able to feed thousands of frontline workers and homebound patients suffering from the effects of COVID-19.

“We were packaging a hundred meals in a matter of hours,” recalled Bhai Harnek Singh, a community organizer who manages the Sikh Center of New York in Flushing, one of several Sikh gurdwaras in the city. The following month, the same basement hosted a small wedding reception, with the subsequent blessing taking place just upstairs. When COVID surged for a second time, the gurdwara expanded next door into an incomplete one-story structure as operations scaled up. I visited the space this past January with the intention of asking a few questions about this ever-adaptive typology. Before I could take out my notebook, I was greeted with a smile and served a delicious lunch and tea.

Loosely defined, gurdwaras are places of worship in Sikhism, the world’s fifth-largest organized religion. The majority of Sikhs reside in Punjab, the northwestern region of India, with around 500,000 followers living in the United States. One of the primary tenets of the faith is the spirit of *seva* (selfless voluntary service) and *sarbat da bhala* (well-being of all people). This ethic of service typically takes the form of a *langar* (community kitchen), where free warm meals are served to all visitors, without any distinction as to

religion, race, gender, or economic status.

According to Devinder Pal Singh, the director at the Center for Understanding Sikhism in Ontario, Canada, in times of emergency “gurdwaras act as shelters or refuges for people.” He recalled the Fort McMurray wildfires of 2016, when Alberta’s Sikh community came together to collect food and clothing at a local gurdwara for those affected. More recently, gurdwaras across North America opened their doors to healthcare workers and Black Lives Matter protesters alike.

The tradition of *seva* extends to the architecture of the gurdwara. Singh explained that the first North American gurdwara, in Stockton, California, evolved from a community room into an elaborate campus, while retaining its essential character. A peculiar feature of this typology is the perpetual building activity that surrounds it. Through donations and grants, gurdwaras tend to be in a constant state of construction. This is the case even for historic examples, such as the monumental Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in New Delhi, which erected a makeshift hospital on its premises during COVID’s second wave in India.

In stylistic terms, gurdwaras are eclectic, incorporating elements of Rajput and Mughal architecture, including minarets, portals, kiosks, domes, foliated arches, and *bangaldar* roofs. These elements have evolved into signifiers of the typology, to be combined or omitted pending circumstances of cost and context. The gurdwara in Queens Village, New York, incorporates none of these elements on its low-lying facade, whereas the Flushing gurdwara fea-

tures a tripartite brick facade topped by a *bangaldar* roof, merlons, and arched kiosks. Meanwhile, the comparatively large gurdwara in South Richmond Hill, New York, recalls the grandeur of 19th-century temples in Punjab. (Perhaps the only essential feature of gurdwaras the world over is the *nishan sahib*, a saffron pendant mounted on rooftops or at places of entry.)

While most contemporary gurdwaras integrate the occasional dome or arch on an otherwise flat facade, their distinguishing feature turns out to be their unique extensibility. The programmatic range is extraordinary and challenges what architects mean by “typology.” The simplest gurdwara can be a single room, provided there is a Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book, within reach. Or it can be a sprawling campus, complete with chapels, *langars*, *sarovars* (pools of water), marriage halls, multipurpose spaces, clinics, and more.

Equally interesting is the speed with which these expansions can occur. For instance, after starting in a basement, the Flushing center is nearing completion of a multipurpose hall. But these adaptations are just as likely to be ephemeral. During the first shuttered weeks of the pandemic, the Queens Village gurdwara moved its kitchen out of its *langar* hall to an adjacent parking lot, which enabled volunteers to continue cooking meals. In Sunnyside, Queens, Sikh community organizers established a *langar* at a protest site where demonstrators had taken a stand against the killings of George Floyd and other Black Americans by police. In Pacoima, Los Angeles, protesters found respite under a

tent in Pan Pacific Park set up by the Khalsa Care Foundation, a local gurdwara. The temporary structure distributed plates of pasta to anyone who wanted it.

It seems that this centuries-old spatial template is only gaining in relevance. Civic spaces around the world are under threat with rising domestic and international tensions in society in part due to social inequities, climate change, refugee crises, and an endemic pandemic. For architect and historian Swati Chattopadhyay, who researches temporary structures, the ability of a community to swell and contract is key to its flourishing. “Momentary and routinized interventions play a large part in creating community and engaging gathering spaces in cities,” Chattopadhyay noted.

Gurdwaras approach civic engagement through acts of communal service and solidarity. Architects should more closely consider how these acts can take ephemeral, spatial form. At a certain temporal scale, all architecture is finite, passing inevitably with the seasons. In modeling future civic spaces, practitioners might take that fact to heart.

Ekam Singh is an MArch student at the Pratt Institute School of Architecture. In 2021–22, he was one of three New Voices in Architectural Journalism fellows. The program was sponsored by Pratt and AN.

Gurdwaras of all shapes and sizes can be found across New York, particularly in Queens, from Woodside (left) to South Richmond Hill (top right) to Queens Village (bottom right).



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100% Organic

An exhibition at The School of Architecture invites new voices to unpack the tricky meaning of a historic Wrightian term.



COURTESY THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE



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COURTESY THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

The desert ignites the imagination. In the stark vastness, you're reminded that you're a tiny, fleshy piece of something unending. It was in this context—of small acts of lively expression within a larger arid wilderness—that visitors to the School of Architecture's (TSOA) Arcosanti campus encountered *Organic*, an exhibition that ran for a month through mid-May. The show offered a contemporaneous view of an unagreed-upon design term that continues to hold special relevance for TSOA.

Organized by director Stephanie Lin, the exhibition acknowledged that, as a design term, *organic* is both cumbersome and lacking in clarity. It continues to be strongly associated with Frank Lloyd Wright, who founded Taliesin West in 1937 as a winter campus for his namesake design school; in 2020, the institution rebranded and moved to Arcosanti, a utopian settlement established in 1970 north of Phoenix by Wright acolyte Paolo Soleri. Connotations of the organic are many and varied. The index for the five-volume *Frank Lloyd Wright: Collected Writings* is a hilarious indication of this, listing approximately 35 specific classifications of its use.

Organic leaned into this ambiguity through an emphasis on part-to-whole relationships that characterize today's information-rich, materially conscious global society. Putting aside Wright's formal ideas, the show collected ten pieces by North American designers,

which ranged from a delicate, ceiba-seed-imbued silver necklace to a rigorous architectural model. The vagueness but also spareness indicated by this use of *organic* (the term) make *Organic* (the show) feel especially relevant to contemporary aesthetics.

The objects were installed in the interior and exterior of Arcosanti's Craft III building. After descending a staircase, visitors encountered two works: *Petrichor*, rough-hewn, pulp paper vessels produced by the experimental studio Aranda\Lasch, and *Breathe*, a scaled-down version of a housing prototype the Brooklyn office SO-IL originally installed at the Salone del Mobile 2017. Next up was Tawaw Architecture Collective's elegant *Three Sisters*, a slowly twirled mobile that was framed by a circular aperture punched into a concrete wall (a distinctive feature of Arcosanti's design). The remaining objects were moored on a gravelly expanse in a covered area below the building. Most were small and similar in size. This scalar relationship did a few clever things, such as underline the formal differences, and thematic resonances, between objects, while also training attention on the texture of the surrounding surfaces. Frequent gusts of wind made visitors notice the fragile stature of the objects, and given their tactile qualities, one felt drawn to touch them. *Six Bells* by the Arcosanti Ceramic Studio rang out, and Ja Architecture Studio's

Organic Sway rocked in the breeze. The latter expresses an idea about how *organic* has long been the subject of disputes within Wright's history. The piece name-checks an 1887 drawing of a house Wright made in the course of a job interview with Louis Sullivan. In the margins, the two dueling over conflicting uses of *organic* in the design: Wright reduced the term to an understanding of the plan's geometry, while Sullivan used it to describe architectural ornament.

Other pieces, like PRŠIĆ & PRŠIĆ's *Scrap Object*, took on a cheeky interpretation of *organic* that imagined ceramics as a recyclable resource. Fixed with globules of goop and looking messy but intriguing, *Scrap* was an incredible contrast to Terrol Dew Johnson's *Form over Function*, another compelling assemblage that acrobatically curled in on itself to form a flexible U-shaped basket. Made from materials (wood, bear grass, sinew) sourced from the Tohono O'odham Nation, *Form* expresses the pre-Wright, Indigenous impulse that "form and function should be one." T+E+A+M's *Cones* conveyed an idea about organically producing material through postconsumer construction debris found on vacant sites in Detroit. Altogether, the show felt wonderfully coy, subtle, experimental, and communal.

It also charted a path forward for TSOA. Lin, who joined the school in 2021, noted that the exhibition gave TSOA the opportunity "to step

back and reexamine the term *organic* in order to identify new opportunities and relevance and with a new set of participants in the conversation." She added that the school's move to Arcosanti "has leveraged our ability to explore alternative and future forms of pedagogy, experimental design, community, and connections to our environments and landscapes."

Organic, ultimately, was about process: Converting raw material into a finished product was core to each artifact. TSOA's reevaluation of the term comes at a time when society has grown politically anxious and the planet continues to be depleted of resources. What does it mean to value "the organic" in our current moment of crisis? Time is explicit in organic processes, which variously evolve, unfold, and grow. Design is similar, as it requires ample time and resources to grow an initial thought into built form. The ten works in *Organic* are a gentle reminder of the precariousness of humanity's relationship to the environment but also of design's potential to navigate new and complex challenges through integrated approaches.

Nick Shekerjian is an architect at Exhibau USA and founder of ONS, a design studio in Phoenix that investigates massive spatial scales, representation, and nature.

Top left: The stairwell of Arcosanti's Craft III building features works by SO-IL, Aranda\Lasch, and the Tawaw Architecture Collective.

Top right: Various pieces were staged in the building's undercroft space.

Left: Terrol Dew Johnson's *Form over Function* (2014)

Middle: Studio Sean Canty's *Swirling Flats* (2022) in front of *Organic Sway* (2022) by Ja Architecture Studio

Right: *Six Bells* (2022) by the Arcosanti Ceramic Studio



Gates Hall at Cornell University - Ithaca, NY

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Slide, Pivot, Rotate

Newly fabricated Judd doors are a key component in SCHAUM/SHIEH's restoration of the Chinati Foundation's Chamberlain Building in Marfa, Texas.



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The Chamberlain Building, which houses artworks by sculptor John Chamberlain as part of the Chinati Foundation, was an office and warehouse for the Marfa Wool & Mohair Company when artist Donald Judd decamped to Marfa, Texas, from New York City in 1971. Built in 1943, the long structure comprised three sections of varying proportions, with sliding doors on its long sides for transferring merchandise to trains and trucks. When the Dia Art Foundation purchased it for Judd along with other properties in 1979, arrows directing pilots to Marfa's nearby airport were painted on the roof. Judd's renovation clarified and unified the building: He added open-face adobe walls, aligned openings and windows to establish a major long axis and secondary short ones, painted the walls a sand color (which he favored for interiors), replaced two roofs and inserted skylights, created a small apartment, and planted a grid of sotols out front. The 23,000-square-foot venue was the first component of Judd's Chinati Foundation to open to the public, in 1983.

In the following decades, the building, not well built to begin with, continued to evolve: The interior and exterior finishes cracked, owing to the thunderous shake of passing trains; the foundation settled; the roof leaked; the skylights' polycarbonate yellowed; and the doors and windows failed. Judd's renovations, though inspired, weren't made with replacement in mind. His windows and doors were straightforward, using dimensions derived from standard pine lumber and made in Marfa using available labor, and they were built into their frames, making them hard to repair when a component wore out. The thin 1x frame of an operable quarter-panel pivot sagged under its weight and was quickly fixed in place. (It remained in that state when I interned at Chinati in 2010.) Nearly everything required serious TLC.

In recent years, the Chinati Foundation has funded that attention, and a restored Chamberlain Building opened to the public in April. A range of careful improvements were led by partners Troy Schaum and Rosalyne Shieh of the Houston- and New York-based architec-

ture office SCHAUM/SHIEH. They first did a building assessment in 2014 and produced drawings in 2017; construction commenced in 2020, supervised by Schaum with associate Andrea Brennan. SCHAUM/SHIEH's scope of work included both camouflaged but impressively executed acts of restoration and new improvements like a wide entry ramp and ADA-accessible bathrooms. Of particular interest here are the three types of doors in the project, as 14 of them were fabricated anew.

Judd used these "two over two" doors throughout his buildings in Marfa. The form came to Judd from historical reliefs, but the cruciform arrangement also refers to grids, because "quartering is the simplest form of a grid," he said in a 1985 interview. (The divided-square window also appears in Aldo Rossi's architecture.) Outside, three exterior gates of various designs, all by Judd, were rebuilt. In the building proper, contractors fabricated a new slider, pivot doors, and a fixed unit with an operable quarter-panel window, with the key improvement that the pine boards now clad a

concealed welded steel tube frame. The rotating lights included in some locations were also made using a hidden steel angle. The wood was clear-sealed with linseed oil and turpentine, a trusted ranch finish, and tempered glass was used instead of plate glass. The interior three pivot doors were retained but restored with new glass and finishing.

Peter Stanley, then Chinati's director of planning and preservation, took advantage of pandemic downtime to fabricate an early prototype of the improved Judd door in the museum's shop. The frame-plus-cladding assembly "allows you to replace parts over time as needed versus a total reconstruction when the whole armature rots," he told *AN*. (Stanley is now the director of operations and preservation for Marfa at Judd Foundation.)

For this restoration, the Los Angeles office of Simpson Gumpertz & Heger provided structural engineering and JC Stoddard, based in San Antonio, was the general contractor. The latter's specialization in historic restoration greatly aided the quality of

Peter Marcuse Never Stopped

Remembering an influential professor of urban planning, who died in March

To begin at the end: As the revolution-ary urbanist Peter Marcuse took his final breaths on March 4, 2022, he returned to his childhood language to offer his last words to his loved ones. *Ich habe etwas zu sagen*. (“I have something to say.”) I assume that life did not allow him to complete the thought, but the statement stands nonetheless: Peter Marcuse had something to say, and he said it beautifully and mightily over the course of his 93 years on earth.

Peter was born in Berlin, but when he was six his parents—mathematician Sophie Wertheim and Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse—fled the Nazi regime, taking Peter first to Switzerland and then to the United States. Peter went on to be one of the world’s most important and influential radical urban planning scholars, melding his research interests in housing, land use, and public space with his political commitments to establishing civil rights, building tenant power, and putting an end to homelessness. He helped found important and lasting institutions of left urban planning like Planners for Equal Opportunity (now the Planners Network), and he tirelessly offered his time and energy to grassroots projects for the realization of the right to the city.

I came to know Peter first through his published texts, then as a teacher, and finally as a mutual sounding board and collaborator. In graduate school I encountered his scholarly writing, always theoretically and empirically rigorous yet readable and relatable. In a class on urban sustainability, we read “Sustainability is not enough,” his short essay deconstructing and ultimately smashing the concept of sustainability itself. He argued that the subject was inherently conservative; in order for the earth to survive, our relations to it—and, just as importantly, to one another—would have to be radically altered.

While attending Hunter College, I began working as an organizer at Tenants & Neighbors. In my first weeks on the job I found in a file cabinet a draft of a paper by Peter titled “The Political Economy of Rent Control: Theory and Strategy,” sent for feedback to the organization’s founder in March 1977. In it, Peter argued that rent control as we know it is not a gift from a mythical “benevolent state,” but rather a reflection of the balance of power between landlords, tenants, and the state. Rent controls, he argued, constitute important protections for tenants, but also enable virtually guaranteed steadily rising rents for landlords even when

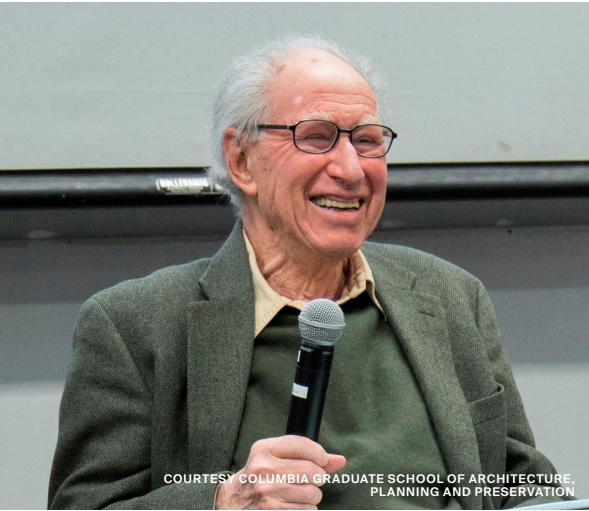
market-rate rents fall—a dynamic borne out in cities like New York during the first year of the pandemic, when rents for market-rate apartments declined but those for rent-stabilized apartments stayed steady or rose.

While working at Tenants & Neighbors, I took Peter’s class “The Housing Question,” co-taught with fellow leftist planner Tom Angotti, at the Brecht Forum, a Marxist adult education center in New York City. Peter had long since retired from Columbia University, but he continued to dedicate himself to educating activists, emerging critics, and curious city dwellers seeking deeper answers about why our cities work the way they do. He didn’t assign many of his own works, but we read a paper of his titled “The Five Lives of Public Housing,” in which Peter demonstrated how the purpose of public housing had shifted over the decades, resulting in changes in its funding levels, design, and tenancy. It was classic Marcuse: He took a piece of the built environment we all thought we knew quite well and showed us that, in fact, it was many other things at once and always the product of ongoing struggle.

Over the past few years, Peter and I would discuss and sometimes collaborate on projects and panels. He would ask me for my thoughts on various subjects, and I would do the same. Whenever I would get an email from him, I’d always ask myself: Why is *he* talking to *me*? The truth was that Peter was an incredibly generous person who never stopped teaching, but he also never stopped wondering. He was always looking to both impart his own knowledge and seek inspiration from younger generations. He was a model of how to retire from one’s career without ever ceasing to learn, question, observe, and make offerings.

To return to the end: Peter spoke his last words—“I have something to say”—on March 4. That day was my paternal grandfather’s birthday. He used to joke that it was the only date on the calendar that constituted a full sentence in English: “March forth!” Peter met his wife, Frances, at a May Day march and would continue to be a fixture at protests as long as he could comfortably walk. The date of Peter’s death serves as his final challenge to radical planners, architects, and urbanists: March forth and build a better world than the one we inhabit today.

Samuel Stein is a researcher, writer, advocate, and critic focused on the intersection of real estate and urban planning in New York City and the author of the book *Capital City: Gentrification and the Real Estate State*.

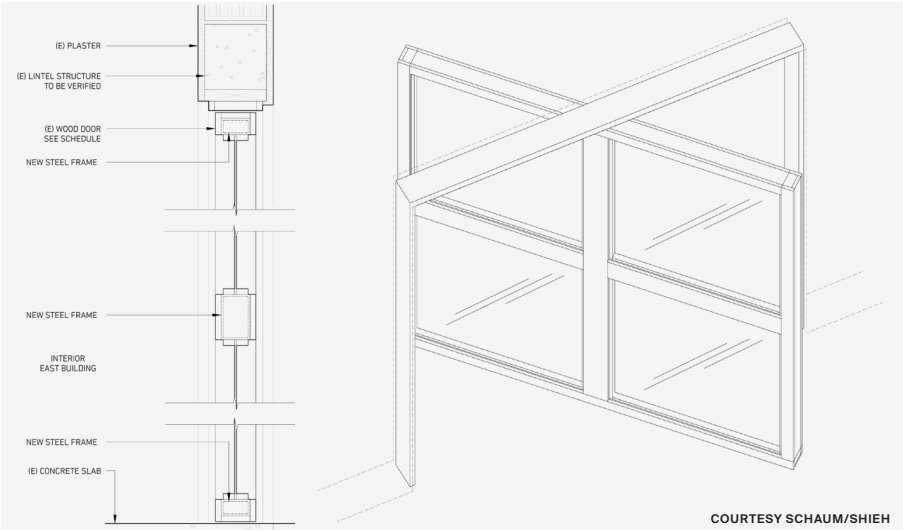


COURTESY COLUMBIA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING AND PRESERVATION

Marcuse was a regular writer and editor of books throughout his career. His final volume was *In Defense of Housing*, coauthored with David J. Madden, and published by Verso in 2016.



ALEX MARKS/COURTESY THE CHINATI FOUNDATION



COURTESY SCHAUM/SHIEH

Facing page, top left: The building, with its stepped facade, is set back along Highland Avenue.

Facing page, bottom left: The open-face adobe wall that creates the western courtyard was also restored.

Facing page, top right: The building’s straightforward finishes establish an appropriate context for Chamberlain’s crushed-car sculptures.

Facing page, bottom right: A south-facing Judd door and sotol grid next to the railroad

Top: A rebuilt fixed window with an operable quarter-pane window opens north to Oak Street.

Above: A detail drawing of a new Judd pivot door with a concealed steel frame clad in pine boards

the work. To start, carpenters first built new surface-mount barn door sliders with a steel Unistrut track concealed by wood flashing on the west end of the building; once complete, Chamberlain’s crushed-car sculptures could be removed for safekeeping during the renovation. Informed by Stanley’s prototype, Kepha Hawkins, a historic-building carpenter, fabricated the remaining pieces on-site inside the warehouse, with dedicated areas for wood- and steelwork.

SCHAUM/SHIEH collaborated with team members, who each contributed their specific expertise. “It seemed to me that our process was some kind of echo of how Judd worked, as he utilized local intelligence and craftspeople to make his art and to make his architecture,” Schaum said. This approach was deeply appropriate: Prior to installing Chamberlain’s pieces, Judd had planned to install his aluminum works in the space; plywood models were built and reviewed on-site, and he even considered making some of the final works there. It was important for Schaum to maintain

the clarity of the place while strengthening its role as a welcoming arrival point for the Chinati Foundation—hence the new wide ramp. The new doors’ easy operability is counterintuitively useful for an art museum; when they’re open, “you really feel connected to the landscape and the air of the place,” Schaum said.

The importance of the Chamberlain Building is one inspiration of many for the recent creation of the Central Marfa Historic District, marking the first time that Judd’s approach to architecture and preservation has been recognized as historically significant by the federal government. The 183 contributing buildings include 11 preserved and repurposed by Judd. The restored Chamberlain Building better provides what, according to former Chinati director Marianne Stockebrand’s assessment, Chamberlain’s “eccentric constructions” need: “light from all sides, smooth walls and floors, and space.”

Jack Murphy

22 Studio Visit

The Unbearable Lightness of Building

Lütjens Padmanabhan mines architectural history to produce buildings with distinctive qualities attuned to contemporary construction.



WALTER MAIR

When one thinks of Swiss-German architecture, the images that come to mind might include comprehensive concrete structures or singular material assemblies. Instead, the work of the Zurich-based office Lütjens Padmanabhan, founded by Oliver Lütjens and Thomas Padmanabhan in 2007, explores thin, sheeted surfaces and buildings that draw attention to their composite makeup. The generation of architects that preceded them—Herzog & de Meuron and Diener & Diener especially—were “famous for the solidity and monolithic appearance of their buildings, where craft and construction formed one unity,” Padmanabhan said. He explained

that the duo “entered our profession when the cost pressure of the market and the thickness of insulation was constantly increasing, so that solidity was almost impossible to reach.” Instead, they contend with global market forces that push designers to build ever more cheaply with fewer generative constraints. In exploring fiber cement shingles with exposed edges and folded metal sheets, their work articulates a language of ordinary lightness. The approach has earned them international attention: Both were John C. Portman Visiting Design Critics in Architecture at Harvard GSD during the spring 2022 semester and previously taught a studio there in 2020.

A youthful mixing of high and low underscores Lütjens Padmanabhan’s repertoire, which spans multifamily affordable housing projects, private residences, installations, furniture, and a Swiss embassy in Algiers. “We love that architecture can be both kind of highbrow and use ideas and expressions from the deep space of history and reconnect to the presence and everyday life through the choice of materials, thickness, vulnerability, awkward form, fragmentation, and so on,” explained Padmanabhan. In referencing a wide-ranging set of cultural touchstones, their work feels urgent and closely linked to conditions of contemporary construction.

Pragmatism and plurality undergird their buildings’ resolutions. Asked about changes in Swiss building conventions, Padmanabhan remarked: “Over the years, we have become more confident. Now we have more trust in human ability to see unity in diversity. That’s why we like to emphasize a kind of value of each element.”

Tiffany Xu is a writer and designer based in the San Francisco Bay Area.



1 Binningen II 2014

Situated in a suburban neighborhood of single-family homes on a sloping site in Zurich, Binningen II maintains a playful lightness while referencing one of the 16th century's architectural heavyweights. Stucco and metal in gray and white—"just one millimeter thick!"—clad the five-unit apartment building, producing subtly protruding lintels and recessed fasciae united by a monochrome consistency. Small windows that "hang from the belly of a big window" are reminiscent of Michelangelo's Laurentian Library in Florence. On the interior, a careful composition of ordinary stone tiles, a grainless matte countertop, and black marble finishes continue this balancing act. Padmanabhan commented, "We've discovered that if you say something with light materials, you can allow yourself to say something that seems quite emphatic and formal without being overbearing."

2 Waldmeisterweg 2018

If Binningen II was a project of testing contemporary expressions of classical order and being inventive with cost-effective construction assemblies, Waldmeisterweg, a four-story affordable housing complex, is the product of its continued development. Wood posts and lapped Eternit panels cut to reveal thin profiles form a rhythmic tectonic language, inspired by Venturi, Scott Brown's Lieb House. "The narrative was that because this is affordable housing, the beach house [concept] is perfect, not only as a tectonic idea but also as a social idea. Because at the beach, everybody is the same; there's no hierarchy," Lütjens said. On the interior, each unit entry opens to a deep kitchen-hallway that terminates at a winter garden, provides generous communal space, and eliminates the inefficiency of internal corridors.

3 Algier 2017–

Now under construction, this one-story, 7,500-square-foot Swiss embassy in Algiers overlooks the ocean and a palm tree garden. Openness and exchange were central terms during the design process. "It's not about representation of a king or monumentality or power," explained Padmanabhan. "It's a representation of democracy, of openness, of negotiation, of different things, different ideas, and different values coming together in discussion and dialogue." Reinforced concrete panels form a fragmented band at the building's periphery. At some moments, the panels create perimeter walls; at others, they tilt up "almost like a garage door"; at still others, they are poised in a raised position, as though extending a welcome invitation.

4 Zwhatt 2019–

The eight-story apartment building for one- and two-person households is based on the theme of "sufficiency." Located in a former industrial area on the outskirts of Zurich, each "maisonette-loft" occupies two levels, arranged in a stepped terrace form that responds to the adjacent luxury apartment tower. "There's this David-and-Goliath pairing between the two buildings," commented Lütjens. The double-height windows on the flat facade lean into this disparate comparison, making the eight levels appear to be an unusually capacious four. Large fiber cement panels with exaggerated lapping are used, tilted outward to form awnings. In line with the theme, the units are as spare as possible, and the designers took a ready-made approach to maximize the use of prefabricated components like the steel spiral staircase. Construction begins this summer.

Bright-Line Rule

Built with a minimal budget, Lake|Flato Architects' San Antonio Federal Courthouse focuses on the most affordable material of all: daylight.



Though subdued, the courthouse facade is loaded with symbolism. The eight stone pilasters on the north face reference the building's eight courtrooms, while horizontal brick courses break the elevation into 12 sections, representing the 12 members of a jury.

San Antonio Federal Courthouse
Design architect: Lake|Flato Architects
Design-build architect: SLAM Collaborative
Construction administration: Alta Architects
(formerly Muñoz & Company)

Design-build contractor: Brasfield & Gorrie
Structural engineer: Datum Engineers
MEP: Integral Group
Landscape architect: Alta Architects
(formerly Muñoz & Company)
Facade consultant: Arup
Blast consultant: Hinman
Facade system: Kawneer

“The wheels of justice turn slowly, but grind exceedingly fine” is an apt comment on the construction of the new San Antonio federal courthouse. Officially opened in April, the project was first awarded in 2009 to Lake|Flato, which had designed a five-story structure and a lower bar building that enclosed an open-air courtyard. In 2013, the effort was put on hold

when the federal government shut down, owing to attempts by congressional Republicans to defund Obamacare. In 2016, with a new president-elect about to enter the White House, the project was revived, but it quickly stalled again the following year because of an updated budget that slashed funding. San Antonio, as it happened, did not vote for Donald J. Trump, a factor that certainly didn't work in its favor, especially in the context of a regime that was already skeptical about spending federal dollars on the General Services Administration's design excellence program.

In responding to these tightened purse strings, Lake|Flato reconfigured the courthouse into something much more conventional: a three-story structure with an atrium. It was a decided compromise for the firm, which was excited about its first courthouse commission and one in its hometown. The architects sought to deliver a truly innovative building, one that would invert the typically cloistered and fortresslike bearing of the

courthouse typology while consuming less energy and putting users in direct contact with the natural environment—and, in doing so, activating the landscape's intimations of life, liberty, and happiness. The atrium would not be the architects' final concession, but, analyzing the constraints at hand, they did see a way to achieve some of their aspirations. If they couldn't open the building to the air, they would at least daylight its interior while greeting the street with a dignified but gregarious face.

The courthouse occupies the southeast corner of South Santa Rosa Avenue and Nueva Street. From there, it is a brief walk across San Pedro Creek, which forms the eastern border of the site, to San Antonio's Main Plaza. Originally called Plaza de las Islas, this open space is the heart of the historic city and evidence of the Hispanic urbanism that organized the town before the freeways enabled development across hill and prairie in all directions. Renovated by Lake|Flato in 2008, the plaza, with its bubbling fountain,

abuts San Fernando Cathedral, which was first constructed in 1731; the towering cypress trees of the legendary San Antonio River Walk (nearby steps leading down to it were also designed by Lake|Flato); and the Bexar County Courthouse, a magnificent Romanesque Revival red sandstone pile designed by noted 19th-century Texas architect J. Riely Gordon.

The importance of the county courthouses of Texas, the most iconic of which were built from 1885 to 1901, is well documented, if not well known. Briefly, in a time when the security of personal property and life itself were often held at the mercy of the meanest man with a gun, courthouses symbolized the power of the state as a protective and democratic institution that established law and order, much as the church did for early Spanish colonists. In this era, courthouses were monumental structures on the order of cathedrals that were funded with public moneys. Lake|Flato, which has built its career designing modern, environmentally responsive buildings imbued with



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traditional materials and building craft, pondered these precedents heavily while designing the federal courthouse.

As the seat of the Western District of Texas, which oversees an area of 93,000 square miles—almost the size of Oregon—the building contains administrative offices for all the federal courthouses from Waco to El Paso, as well as its own district and municipal courtrooms, associated judges' and clerks' chambers, U.S. marshals' quarters, a prisoner cellblock, and a jury assembly room, as well as spaces for naturalizations and other ceremonies. The architects housed the administrative functions in the southern wing and the court-

rooms and judges' and clerks' chambers in the north wing, which faces Nueva Street.

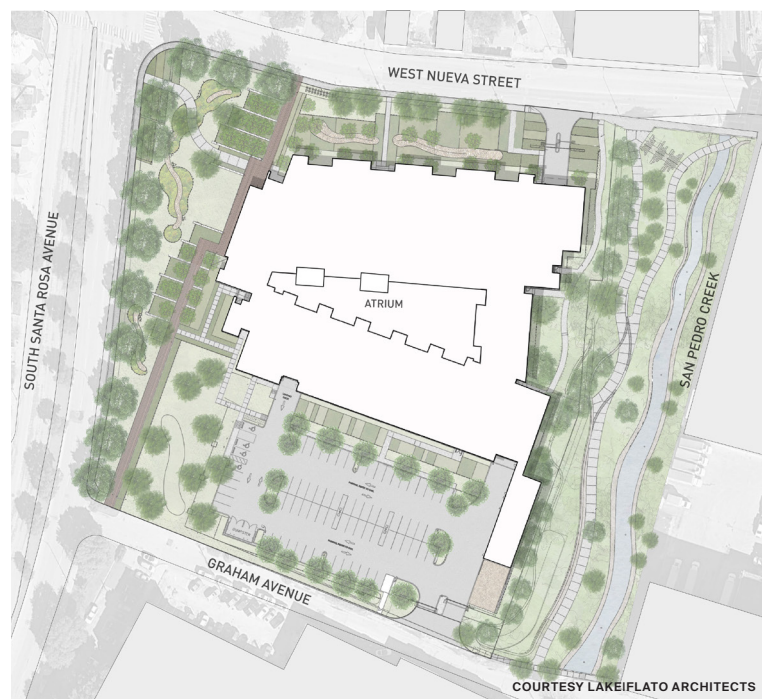
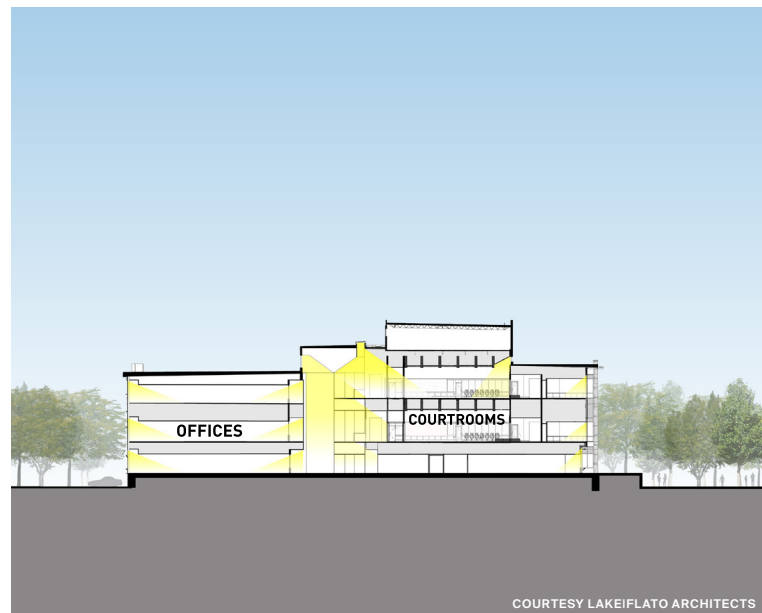
On the northern elevation, the facade is broken up into a rhythm of rough-cut Lueders limestone pilasters alternating with inset glass panels. The pilasters, of which there are eight, representing the eight courtrooms, are broken into 12 bands, representing the 12 members of a traditional jury, by horizontal redbrick courses finished with a German smear, a common local building style. (By the 1880s, San Antonio's population was mostly German.) The western facade, which faces South Santa Rosa Avenue, is largely glass shaded by a sizable gray painted metal brise-soleil supported by large

steel pipe columns. The southern face, which currently looks onto a gated parking lot, picks up the rhythm of the north side, though the indents between stone pilasters were value-engineered out, leaving a flat surface with terra-cotta spandrel panels between the windows.

Taken as a whole, the composition is orderly if a bit staid, especially when compared with the nearby Bexar courthouse, whose rusticated stone blocks are stacked in an ebullient array of configurations. But considering that at a certain point in budget discussions it was proposed that the building be finished with stucco, it's a victory that the architects and their liaison, U.S. district

judge Xavier Rodriguez, fought hard enough to ensure that it is at least clad with local stone.

The courthouse is elevated above street level on a 4-foot plinth, giving it a temple-like prominence. Set far back from the curb for security reasons (the same ones that all federal buildings must follow post-Timothy McVeigh), it is surrounded by landscaping completed by Alta Architects. The terrain features native plantings and bioswales that reference San Antonio's historic acequias and filter stormwater before it runs into San Pedro Creek. Large stone tiers step down from the building's eastern face to the creek, which used to be treated as little more than a



Facing page, left: The atrium features two large artworks by Thomas Glassford.

Left: White acoustic plaster pilasters in the atrium pick up the rhythm established on the facade.

Facing page, top right: Oak screens and balconies punctuate the courtroom floors.

Top: A section shows how daylight infiltrates the building through window walls and clerestories.

Facing page, bottom right: Top-floor courtrooms receive daylight from a clerestory.

Above: Landscaping connects the courthouse to San Pedro Creek.

back-alley drainage ditch but is undergoing its own redevelopment. One day soon it will feature a walking path that leads all the way to the creek's confluence with the San Antonio River.

When one walks through the main entrance, on the building's west elevation, there's no getting around the security screening that greets visitors upon entry. Things get better on the other side of the metal detectors, where the first bits of public art appear in the elevator lobby. The elevator doors themselves feature a shadow pattern of the plan of downtown San Antonio, while three paintings by longtime Lake|Flato partner and collaborator Matt Morris hang above. They depict the city at discrete

moments in its three-century history: in 1750, 1850, and 1950. The entire lobby itself sits atop the old Camino Real, which runs south all the way to Mexico City.

Turning the corner, visitors move from the compressed space of the lobby into the expansive and bright atrium. It is, in fact, cathedralesque. The north and south wings of the building splay out, following the trapezoidal geometry of the site. Large pilasters of acoustic plaster rise to the full height of the space, breaking up the wood-paneled loggias that flank the atrium and echoing the rhythm established on the facade. The floor's terrazzo abstracts the region's historic waterways into

a field of green, white, and brown. The same pattern is repeated in the clerestory windows that peek out of dormers in the wood ceiling. At the far end are a raised wooden dais and a stairway that leads to the jury assembly room, which is separated from the atrium by an operable glass wall. Two works by the artist Thomas Glassford grace this space: A pendant of blown glass shapes hangs across from a 15-foot-by-50-foot mural of overlapping patterns in blue, red, orange, and green. Glassford, who grew up in Laredo, Texas, before moving to Mexico City in the 1990s to start his art career, creates abstract works that play with notions of cultural hybridity—a nice fit for

a space that hosts naturalization ceremonies.

In his comments at the courthouse's opening ceremony, Lake|Flato cofounder David Lake spoke about light. "Daylight is without prejudice," he said. "It falls upon us equally. It illuminates." It also comes free of charge, making it a key asset for this cash-strapped project. That the courthouse is clear and easy to navigate is cause for commendation. It doesn't mirror the labyrinthine proceedings of jurisprudence, nor the polarized politics that plagued its construction, and that's a good thing. **Aaron Seward**



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Lefroy Brooks: Beckford House & Tower

At the Beckford House & Tower, designed by Studio Sofield, bathrooms and powder rooms in these exquisite Upper East Side residences are appointed with historically appropriate bath fixtures and accessories from Lefroy Brooks. In particular, elements from the Mackintosh collection, specified here, take their inspiration from 1930s Art Deco design. Stylized geometric forms characterize this modernistic, transitional collection.

lefroymackintosh.com

Bath and sink fixtures from the Mackintosh collection contribute to the sense of 20th century design excellence offered in this Manhattan development.



COURTESY LEFROY BROOKS

Hastings Tile & Bath: VOLA at Beverly West



JIM BARTSCH/COURTESY HASTINGS TILE & BATH

Beverly West is a 22-story boutique luxury high-rise in Los Angeles. Plum Design West created five specific interior designs inspired by classic Hollywood personas for each penthouse. The design team gracefully layered finishes and lighting to create these stories and incorporated the chic and minimalistic products from iconic Danish faucet brand VOLA.

Plum Design West selected VOLA's HV10 faucets, "floating" electric towel warmers, the O60 ceiling-mount showerhead, the FS3 free-standing shower with hand shower, and the FS1 free-standing tub filler with hand shower. The iconic HV1 faucet in Black Chrome contrasts with the bright and contemporary decor in the guest bath spaces. To see the full range of VOLA's product offerings, visit the Hastings Tile & Bath showroom, located on the 10th floor of the A&D Building.

hastingstilebath.com

Each primary, junior suite, and guest bathroom in this design scheme utilizes VOLA fixtures, which integrate well with the cabinetry and surrounded surfaces.

Discover Design at the A&D Building

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In addition to the aesthetic of these design lines, Miele has also increased its 30-inch width offering for appliances by 30 percent. This allows for more design layout options without the need for trim kits. Featuring refined design and pioneering technology, these intuitive appliances integrate purposeful innovation for a completely new kitchen experience.

mieleusa.com

With technology designed with the user in mind, the Miele Generation 7000 appliances are the perfect match for any residential or commercial need.

JennAir: Natiivo Miami

Natiivo Miami has redefined the real estate industry and revolutionized home-sharing. It is the first building purposefully designed, built, and licensed for home-sharing, offering flexible ownership with home-sharing as a built-in, premiere amenity. Natiivo properties let owners host their units on short-term rental platforms at their leisure, allowing them to travel while simultaneously earning supplemental income.

In the spirit of the Natiivo project, JennAir luxury appliances have pushed the boundaries, featuring obsessive craftsmanship and indulgent details. With exceptional performance, masterful execution, and provocative design, JennAir offerings are powerful, yet bespoke to individual tastes. These products shatter norms and deliver the elevated performance that Natiivo's luxury consumers deserve. Schedule a virtual or in-person visit to the A&D Showroom to learn more.

jennair.com

JennAir's appliances beautifully integrate into the airy, contemporary interiors designed for Natiivo's Miami location in the heart of downtown.



Building in Africa

SOMEPLACE
OLD





CHRISTIAN RICHTERS

Facing page: The confluence of the Bani and Niger Rivers in Mali, with Mopti on the right. **Above:** The Centre for Earth Architecture in Mopti, designed by Kéré Architecture.

SOMEONE NEW

with Pritzker Prize winner Francis Kéré

Text by Ibai Rigby
Photography by Ibai Rigby and Christian Richters

It didn't surprise me when the Pritzker Architecture Prize announced its latest laureate. After all, the so-called Nobel Prize of architecture has a history of alternating between global media darlings, such as Philip Johnson or Rem Koolhaas, and more regional characters, like Glenn Murcutt or Sverre Fehn. There has been no lack of African candidates who have deserved the award during its 43-year history. The influence of Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy (1900–89) on contemporary alternative practices has yet to be fully recognized, and David Adjaye has been a runner-up on several occasions. The architectural establishment has been endeavoring to redeem the profession from its role in the excesses that led to the Great Recession of 2008, an attempt epitomized by Andres Lepik's 2010 MoMA exhibition *Small Scale, Big Change*, which focused on projects for underserved communities. There is a high probability that future Pritzker juries will pick candidates from those who participated in that exhibition. Out of the 12 architects presented in the show, three have already been selected, including this year's winner, Diébédo Francis Kéré.

This is not the first time Western architects have turned their eyes toward Africa in times of crisis. British critic Reyner Banham (1922–88), for example, believed architects were ignoring the rampant technological progress of his day. As a provocation, his book *The Architecture of the Well-Tempered Environment* (1969) imagined environmental management

replacing the human need for shelter and drew influence from African constructions. For an audience accustomed to the images of Edward Steichen's exhibition *The Family of Man* (1955) and Bernard Rudofsky's *Architecture without Architects* (1964), examples of "outsider architecture" were plentiful. "Societies who do not build substantial structures," Banham wrote, "group their activities around some central focus—a water hole, a shade tree, a fire, a great teacher" and inhabit spaces "whose external boundaries are vague, adjustable according to functional need, and rarely regular." Habitation of this sort was to be found in pueblos in the American Southwest and Dogon country in Mali, which Team X member Aldo van Eyck (1918–99) visited while looking for placemaking and form-giving alternatives to the functionalist tendencies of CIAM. The secluded region along the Bandiagara Escarpment where the Dogon people took refuge from Muslim marauders in the 15th century has preserved a distinctive animist outlook, mostly intact even today. Its settlements match the preconceived ideas most Westerners have about Africa: round buildings made of mud and thatched roofs organized in circles around an open courtyard, each hamlet commanding a territory of the size needed to produce food for its inhabitants, and palaver huts at the center of the courtyards offering shade for the elders to discuss community matters. The ceilings are usually low to prevent occupants from standing up and engaging in

violence—at least, that is what tour guides tell most tourists. Not so long ago, hordes of wannabe anthropologists flooded the Dogon country, longing to experience *Paradise Lost*.

The Bandiagara Escarpment funnels the Niger River north toward Timbuktu, a hub at the end of the gold, salt, and slave trade routes that have crossed the Sahara since antiquity. The river serves as a highway for commercial and cultural exchange. Its banks are populated with villages built out of clay but somehow more complex than those found in the Dogon country. They are inhabited chiefly by Malinke agriculturists but also by the Bozo, who fish; the Fula pastoralists; and other groups engaged in trade. The most important market, in the city of Djenné, takes place in front of the Great Mosque, probably the most iconic raw earth building on the planet. The French built it in 1907 on the site of a similar, older structure dating back to the 12th century, itself near an archaeological site dating back at least to the 2nd century BCE. Its porcupinelike spikes serve as permanent scaffolding, allowing for the required recladding, which takes the form of a photogenic festival every year. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, an organization for which I worked from 2005 to 2014, restored it, together with the Great Mosque in Mopti and the Djinguereber Mosque in Timbuktu, from 2006 to 2010. The idea was that architectural conservation would stimulate the economy through the regeneration of craftsmanship and

the development of cultural tourism. The reality that, from the point of view of most architecture historians, most African nations remain within the "Here be dragons" wilds of pre-Columbian cartographers doesn't mean there's nothing there to explore and enjoy.

Shortly before completing the renovation projects, the trust selected the city of Mopti to house an interpretation center for earthen architecture. Located at the confluence of the Bani and Niger Rivers and home to an 8,340-foot-long tarmac and terminal the size of most private community airports in the United States, the self-styled "Venice of Mali" was the entry point for travelers on the road to Djenné, the Dogon country, and Timbuktu. Income generated by the new facility would pay for a sanitation project in a region troubled by malaria. A humble first proposal, designed inhouse, was quickly dismissed by senior management, which desired a project with higher visibility.

The stakes for this effort were high. Mali was going through an enormous process of land privatization, so interested parties were offering attractive gifts with which to win the government's favor. The goal was to control a 1930s irrigation system built by the French colonial government that covered an area of around 400 square miles, and convert it to export-oriented agriculture, producing everything from sugarcane to agrofuels. Muammar Gaddafi, then Libya's ruler and chairperson of the African Union, was building a new government

There are many examples of earthen architecture in Mali (top left), from the circular houses with thatched roofs of the Dogon people (top middle), to the Great Mosque of Djenné, the most famous mud building in the world. Kéré's Centre for Earth Architecture (bottom middle and far right) is steps from another monument of earthen architecture, the Great Mosque of Mopti (bottom left).





The Centre for Earth Architecture was constructed with local labor using materials that were sourced nearby. The hand-pressed bricks are made out of clay dug from the river and include a small percentage of cement for stability.

office complex in the capital, Bamako, and a large Friday mosque in Mopti. Chinese investors were building hospitals and laying down the first expressway in the country. His Highness the Aga Khan had to meet expectations to be taken seriously. Consequently, on top of the restoration projects and the interpretation center in Mopti, a new park was to be built surrounding the National Museum in Bamako, which houses one of the best collections of African art outside the West. High-profile architects were to be employed. Quality would prevail over quantity.

But the first round of invitations didn't turn out well. The prospect of building a small museum and a couple of park pavilions in one of the world's poorest countries didn't appeal to the global architectural elite. Back then, I was a jack-of-all-trades at the trust's headquarters in Geneva, shuffling between both sides of a corridor separating the Historic Cities Program and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. I was evidently one of the few in the office who made this trek, as no one involved in the Mali projects had heard of Francis Kéré, even though he had won the Aga Khan Award in 2004 for the primary school he designed for his hometown, Gando, in neighboring Burkina Faso. I mentioned his name and gave a copy of the award's catalogue to the manager in charge of mud architecture conservation, but never heard back. Whether or not my cross-corridor voyages made any difference, the trust wound up hiring Kéré to design its projects in Mali.

Mali proclaimed its independence from France on September 22, 1960. Fifty years

later, we were racing to complete the center and park pavilions in time for the anniversary. Things were not going as expected. Whenever Kéré visited Mali, he spent his time attempting to secure new projects rather than visiting job sites and making decisions. The scarcity of building materials and construction machinery endangered His Highness's promises to deliver the projects in time for Independence Day. The project in Bamako benefited from an experienced project manager who couldn't care less about Kéré's building principles. He had most of the structure prefabricated by a Qatari company in Turkey, shipped in containers to Mali, and erected on-site like a Lego set. Concrete block walls were clad in time with local stone. On the other hand, the project in Mopti was led by a younger team trying to replicate the methods Kéré employed in Gando—namely, pursuing a labor-intensive approach that used large numbers of workers rather than renting machines to do the same job. This seemingly counterintuitive (to Western eyes) approach funneled more of a project's funds directly into the pockets of those who needed it the most—local laborers. But deadlines tend to be enemies of principles, and since the building site was accumulating delays, top management transferred our entire workforce to Mopti. I found myself landing at Mopti Airport in the middle of a summer storm four months before the center's scheduled opening date.

I had prepared a few drawings beforehand for basic items like window specifications, exhibition furniture, and cafe

stools. Everything was tossed into the garbage after my first encounter with the ironmongers. I had to simplify every design so they could be assembled with the few tubular profiles available. I also had to build mock-ups, since most workers didn't understand architectural drawings. The concrete mixer we leased from a fat guy driving a Mercedes-Benz SUV fell apart daily, so we decided to hire ten extra workers in its place. The Chinese building sites in the area monopolized the available cranes, so we had to engineer how to place the 600-pound IPN-profile steel beams atop the bearing walls safely by hand. A Burkinabè builder produced all the stabilized compressed-earth bricks on-site, using clay from the nearby riverbed and a small amount of cement (around 10 to 15 percent), employing a hand press he had brought with him from Ouagadougou. He had negotiated a reasonable price with the expectation that he would win new commissions in Mopti. Unfortunately, the only other building in town made with bricks was a prison built during colonial times.

The great advantage of Kéré's plan was its flexibility. It allowed us to make a few changes in the program without losing the idiosyncrasy of the whole design. Its main feature, a large secondary roof providing shade and cross ventilation above a massive ceiling, may have been inspired by earlier examples of "tropical architecture" such as Le Corbusier's High Court in Chandigarh, India. But whereas L.C. employed heavy *béton brut*, Kéré intelligently uses cheap and readily available rebar and tin sheets. Cantilevering eaves

shelter the earthen walls from water erosion, and vaulted brick ceilings provide thermal mass, protecting the inside from direct solar radiation. Near the end of construction, Kéré threatened to disavow the project because one of our colleagues, the compressed stabilized earth block advocate, attempted to demonstrate the material's possibilities by including a round opening in one of the walls. But this aberration was overlooked when, after completion, Kéré showed up with photographer Iwan Baan to inspect everything that we had made. Behold—it was very good. The project has been featured in several publications and exhibitions. Nevertheless, as political stability eroded, the grand opening was first postponed and then abridged to a small event a couple of months later. It never received the number of visitors needed to cover the costs and is now more of a training and community center than a museum.

I did not see Kéré again until a couple of years later. I was staying with an architect friend in Koudougou, Burkina Faso's third most populous city. We visited Tiebelé, a traditional Kassena culture settlement near the border with Ghana known for its houses' decorative patterns, which are painted by the village women once the harvest season is over. On the way back, we stopped in Gando. Kéré happened to be in town, and he kindly gave us a tour of his projects there. Gone was the prima donna attitude of relentlessly chasing ministers and donors or complaining about rounded windows. Instead, we found the architect playing a home

game, enthusiastically discussing every construction detail, passionately presenting the material experiments he had been working on. The Holcim Foundation had recently granted him \$100,000 to complete the Naaba Belem Goumma Secondary School, only a few yards away from the primary school that led to his early fame. He was testing different in situ cast walls made from a mix of clay and cement similar to that we had used for the bricks in Mopti. But by playing around with molds, he could achieve greater expression and variety. (Mannerism always follows high points, I thought to myself.)

An important aspect that escaped me before meeting Kéré at home is that he is a prince. After the site visit, we went for lunch to a nearby *maquis* (the French-Burkinabè word for “restaurant”), and the owner would not allow us to sit anywhere other than on a dais reserved for grooms during wedding celebrations, or the *chef du village*, who happened to be our host. Passersby approached our table and thanked their sovereign for all he was doing for his people. My friend and I thanked him for inviting us for lunch, shook hands, and left Gando driving an old Renault 9, which barely reached the capital, Ouagadougou.

Since then, I've crossed paths with Kéré at a few architecture biennales, exhibition openings, lectures, and once in his medium-size office in Berlin. His fame has grown exponentially without him losing an inch of his charisma. Everybody

I know who has worked with him has enjoyed the experience and learned a good deal. Those who compete with him for the same projects acknowledge him as a formidable competitor. However, I feel that his latest projects have conformed more to what a naive Caucasian audience would expect from an African-born architect: Round shapes, bright colors, ephemeral pavilions, and Camper stores have replaced the elegant pragmatism of his earlier works, which exhibit a sort of creativity that comes only when resources are scarce. The words *sustainability* and *utopia* are mentioned ad nauseam in the rivers of ink that have flowed following the Pritzker proclamation, yet Kéré's only large-scale building under construction is the Benin National Assembly, a \$43 million concrete juggernaut being built by the China State Construction Engineering Corporation, a company with a long track record of corruption. Little is written about the actual use of many of his buildings, and postoccupancy reports are hardly available.

None of this, of course, is Kéré's fault. The political vacuum left following the assassination of Gaddafi by rebel fighters in 2011 destroyed the delicate balance that maintained stability in the Sahel—the semiarid region between the Sahara and the Sudanese savanna, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have become nurseries of extremist terrorism as well as a proxy battlefield in the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces. As I write

this, France is withdrawing 5,000 soldiers from the region, the government of Mali has invited Russian mercenaries to join its war on terror, and, last January, a coup d'état took place in Burkina Faso. Colonial legacies, entrenched corruption, irredeemable national debts, and political isolation are dragging more and more people into poverty, making them keener to join the ranks of jihadi groups with the hope of a better future, if not on earth, then at least in the afterlife. *Momentum of Light*, a recent exhibition by Iwan Baan of Kéré's homeland, accurately registers this reality, even if the photographer's statement says otherwise. Gone are the images of smiling kids we've become used to seeing in the architect's work. In their place, faces apathetically stare at smartphone screens as the only source of light and hope. There's not much that architecture can do in the face of this reality.

By celebrating Francis Kéré's architecture, the Pritzker Prize only serves Western complacency. Admiring his successes only diverts our attention from the larger narrative of the region: land grabs, fossil fuel dependency, and modern colonialism. Even worse is the dark irony that a U.S. institution should promote the visibility of open-air schools abroad when at home children are held captive in fortresslike buildings to protect them against mass shootings and terrorist attacks.

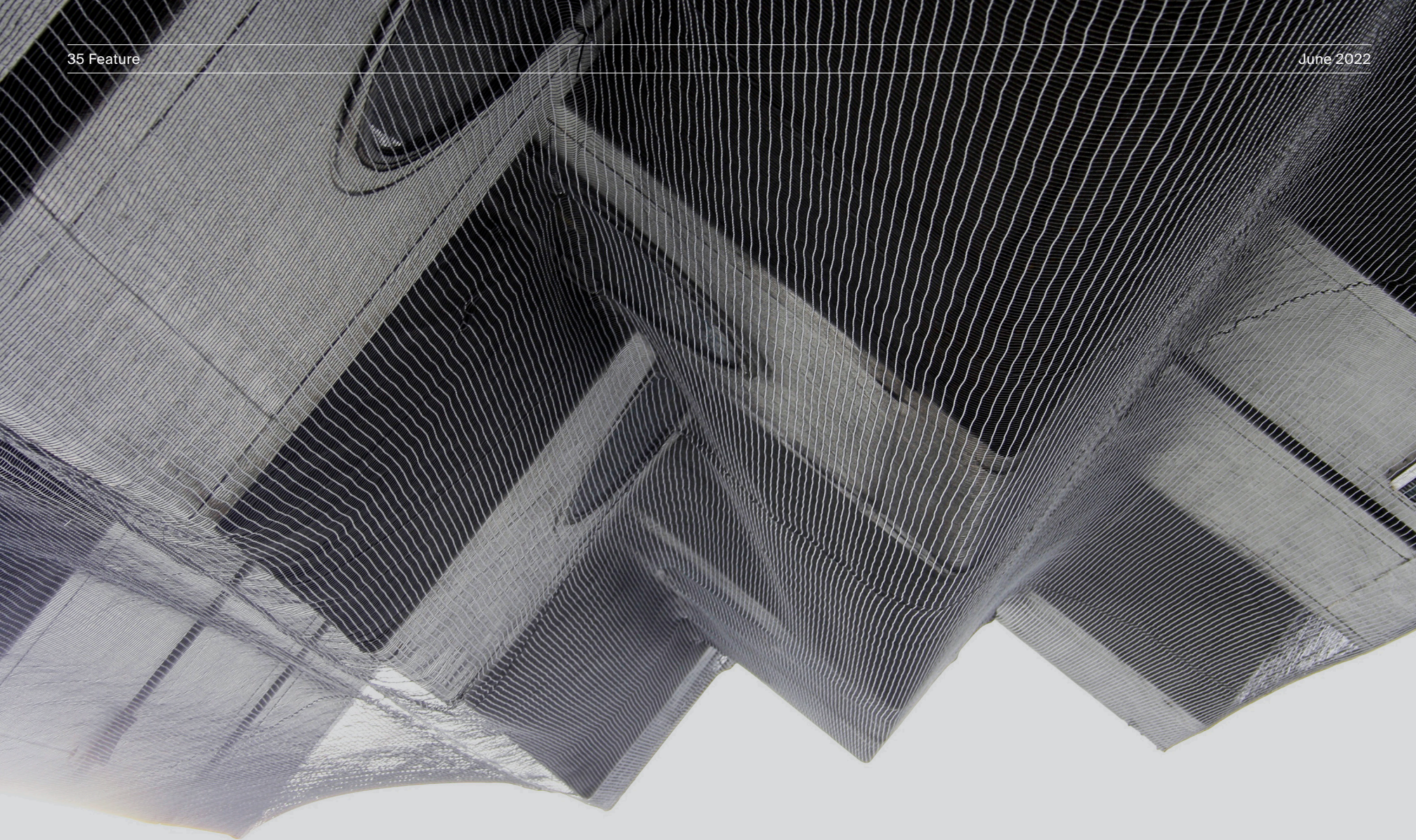
Since architecture curators began promoting this social turn more than a decade ago, no big changes seem to have

happened on the ground. There's no lack of architectural ideas ready to be tested and deployed in the realms of housing, institution-making, schools, parks, or cultural preservation, to name a few. What is missing is the political will to change things. And perhaps it is here that Kéré, the great teacher standing in the center of it all, might have something to say.

Ibai Rigby is a researcher and PhD candidate at RWTH Aachen University in Germany.

The shed roof is supported on trusses made from rebar and angle iron (top left and bottom middle). Large overhangs protect the earthen walls from water erosion (top right and bottom right). The vaulted brick ceiling protects the interior from solar radiation (top middle). A circular aperture was added without consulting the architect (bottom left).





METABOLIZED

The slow deconstruction of Kisho Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Tower in Tokyo began on April 12 and will continue through the end of the year. A curious public has been able to watch this process in near real time: Local crowds gather to pay their respects, and visitors from around the world snap farewell shots, with everyone sharing images on social media. Kurokawa was the youngest founding member of the Metabolists, a group of postwar architects in Japan who championed biological megastructures. Their “frantic futurism,” as described by Kenneth Frampton in *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, resulted in only a handful of built works. The tower's demolition is no surprise, as its problems were well known from the start. That it survived half a century is a feat in and of itself. Kurokawa showed us a version of a possible pod world that proved to be immensely influential, for better and worse. While we shouldn't repeat the tower's mistakes, its optimism about alternative futures is a legacy worth noting. To mark this moment, *AN* gathered remembrances in text and image from those whose trajectories brought them in close contact with the building.

METABOLIC MEMORIES

I first saw the Nakagin Capsule Tower during the summer of 1992, when I would pass by the iconic Metabolist work by Kisho Kurokawa (1934–2007) on my daily commute as an architectural intern in the Tokyo offices of the Takenaka Corporation. Twenty years had passed since the completion of the twin, 177-foot-tall towers, which comprised 140 prefabricated capsules, yet I looked with excited wonder into the large circular window of the model unit on the ground level; the interiors were furnished with super-graphic bedcovers, a Sony reel-to-reel tape player, and a Trinitron TV. I found it astounding that Kurokawa had helped found the Metabolist movement at just 26 years of age—just a few years older than I was at the time. The group boldly used the biological word *metabolism*, in the belief that “design and technology should be a denotation of human vitality,” as Kurokawa wrote in 1960. Here in front of me, I experienced the physical manifestation of his “future designs of (the) coming world” in this “concrete design” that he built at 38, which would become arguably the most notable design of his entire career.

From the outset, the Nakagin Tower stood within a “metabolically” transforming bayside urban district. The site was adjacent to the terminus of Tokyo’s first railway station, the former Shimbashi Freight Terminal, and elevated highways completed after the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. With the onset of bubble-period development in the mid-1980s, the adjacent rail yards became the site of the massive Shiodome urban redevelopment. In the summer of 1992, it was still an open site used as an event space, covered by a massive circus tent, though this scene would radically change over the subsequent decade.

Kurokawa had envisioned the capsules to have a life span of 25 to 35 years and the tower some 60 years. Many of the surrounding buildings would end up having much shorter life spans or become radically transformed sites. In 2004, Takenaka moved its offices farther out toward Tokyo Bay, and its former tower was demolished to make way for a taller one, as building code limits evolved. The 48-story Dentsu Building Tower, designed by Jean Nouvel and Jon Jerde, was completed in 2002 on the open site in front of the tower; at 700 feet in height, it was four times taller than the Nakagin. Kurokawa’s Sony Tower building, which featured capsules the same size as those of the Nakagin Capsule Tower and was built between 1972 and ’76, was demolished in 2006, followed by Kurokawa’s own passing at 73.

Despite the constant changes in urban Japan between the 20th and 21st centuries, the original vision of the Nakagin Capsule Tower maintained its allure. A film capturing the factory fabrication of its capsules, crane assembly on-site, and a day in the life of one of its residents was featured in the 2008 MoMA exhibition *Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling*.

The continued maintenance of the units proved to be challenging and led to its eventual demise. In a 2009 *New York Times* article, Nicolai Ouroussoff wrote that the building was

a rare built example of Japanese Metabolism, a movement whose fantastic urban visions became emblems of the country’s postwar cultural resurgence, the 1972 Capsule Tower is in a decrepit state. Its residents, tired of living in squalid, cramped conditions,

voted two years ago to demolish it and are now searching for a developer to replace it with a bigger, more modern tower. That the building is still standing has more to do with the current financial malaise than with an understanding of its historical worth.

In proving the longevity of Kurokawa’s vision, the capsule tower subsequently took on new life. While some units would simply become storage units, they captured the imagination of a new generation, including Tatsuyuki Maeda, who acquired 15 capsules starting in 2010, the year that hot water was shut off from the building. Nonetheless, those desiring a first-hand experience of capsule living could rent units through Airbnb, beginning in 2015, and the interiors of other units were transformed to accommodate uses varying from minimal home offices to tea ceremony rooms. Kurokawa himself translated the capsule ideal for his own teahouse villa, Capsule House K, completed in 1973 in the Karuizawa resort outside Tokyo, underscoring the broader historical trajectory of the capsule ideal. From 2018, the Nakagin Capsule Tower operated as a monthly capsules facility and offered some 200 occupants the opportunity to stay at the tower for weeks at a time.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be the final blow for the Nakagin. The owners collectively agreed to sell their units in 2021, and disassembly began on April 12 and will continue through the end of this year. From the outset, the Nakagin’s temporality may have been fated in its naive optimism through the use of materials like asbestos, originally thought to be a lightweight, fireproof material. Its use resulted in the enormous cost of some 2 billion to 3 billion yen (\$16 million to \$24 million) required for the tower’s renovation. While the original Sony Trinitron televisions and reel-to-reel tape players were emblematic of their conception as products inevitably to be replaced, the architecture also expressed its impermanence structurally: Each capsule was attached to the infrastructural towers using four bolts. While Kurokawa originally intended them to be replaced, they never were, owing to the complex realities of ownership and maintenance. Nonetheless, the original units may live on in new museum sites dispersed around the world and, perhaps most importantly, as manifestations of the constantly evolving ideals of Metabolism in which Kurokawa, writing in *Japan Architect* about the Nakagin Capsule Tower upon its completion, reconceived “the house as a community of individuals living in new innovative ways.”

Ken Tadashi Oshima is a professor of architecture at the University of Washington, where he teaches transnational architectural history, theory, and design. He is the author of many books, including *International Architecture in Interwar Japan*.

For all of its existence, the Nakagin Capsule Tower in Ginza was partly obscured by a nearby expressway, built for the 1964 Summer Olympics.

AN OBSOLESCENT MASCULINE DREAM

The Nakagin Capsule Tower encapsulates the futuristic macho dreams of the 1970s. Its designer, Kisho Kurokawa, was the youngest founding member of the Metabolists, a group of avant-garde architects (all men) who reimagined how Japanese people would live, work, and play. Fifty years after completion, the tower has become a symbol of obsolescent masculinity.

In July 2014, I rented a unit in Tower B on Airbnb. I was born in Tokyo in the early 1970s and had come to associate the building with the Japan of my childhood. I had been following the debate over its fate, and I was keen to experience capsule living firsthand. I was intrigued by the disparity between the building’s futuristic aspirations and the nostalgia that surrounded the movement for its preservation.

Kurokawa designed the capsules as temporary residences and offices in central Tokyo for elite businessmen. The capsules had no kitchens; instead, like a well-appointed hotel, the building featured a restaurant on the ground floor and offered housekeeping and secretarial services. During my one-night stay, I encountered no women and only a few men in the lobby and hallways. The deteriorating state of the building amplified my anxiety as night fell. In the Nagakin’s nearly abandoned state, the front desk was manned by men in uniforms who resembled security guards more than concierges. I imagined that hostesses or female secretaries greeted the residents in the 1970s. All these years later, the building remains a world of men.

Kurokawa sought to depart from the nationalistic visions of the preceding generation, which looked to traditional Japanese architecture or copied Western architecture without modifications. (His father, Miki Kurokawa, was an architect, as were his two brothers.) The Metabolists, who aspired to develop a modern architectural language of their own, distinct from European modernism, looked instead to Japanese philosophies of impermanence and eternal adaptation. The Nakagin Capsule Tower was designed for *home movens*, or businessmen whose high social status was associated with mobility; as such, they moved between multiple residences. After a late night at the office, they would dine and drink with their colleagues. Instead of commuting back to their homes

on the Tokyo outskirts, they would sleep in their capsules until they returned to the office early the next morning. The capsules isolated the men in a world without wives and underscored their separation from domestic lives. The tower left no room for families with young children or older parents for whom the women might be caring at home.

Since the building’s completion, societal ideals for which the building stood have changed. While surveys suggesting that Japanese men today share few domestic chores and little earning power with women, relative to other countries, women expect men to share more household burdens, and both women and men consider Japanese men to be less assertive and proactive—in other words, less masculine—compared with their fathers. Despite these shifting values, the capsules did not evolve alongside them and were never replaced as the architect intended. In her book *The Japanese Woman: Traditional Image and Changing Reality*, psychologist Sumiko Iwao writes that the generation of women born in the decade after World War II rejected the male-dominated households of their parents’ generation and married men whom they saw as equals, all while their male partners continued to expect their wives to perform the traditional maternal role at home. Along with the lack of equal employment opportunity legislation and support systems like child care, architecture stood in the way of women’s aspirations for change.

Admittedly an extraordinary work of architecture, the Nakagin Capsule Tower nonetheless represented a particular type of domestic and professional ethos centered on men in which women were alienated, subjected to assistive roles both at home and at the office.

The careful demolition of the tower is also a dismantling of a futuristic masculine vision. Today, the current generation of Japanese—and certainly most women—find this outlook, much like the aging tower that is now disappearing, obsolete.

Aki Ishida is an architect, educator, and writer currently serving as interim associate director of Virginia Tech School of Architecture + Design in Blacksburg, Virginia.



FILipe MARALHÃES AND ANA LUISA SOARES

MY VACANT MUSE

When I visited the Nakagin Capsule Tower for the first time in August 2010, I had no intention of making it the subject of a project that would last over a decade. Many who have experienced the building in person understand its strange but undeniable magnetism. I was captivated by the building the moment I entered a capsule whose original futuristic interior was mostly intact. Despite the overwhelming heat and humidity inside, I became fixated on the large circular window across the room. The natural light that came through the circular window illuminated the capsule in such a haunting way.

I began to document the state of individual capsules as a response to this potential disappearance. I wanted to examine what became of an architecture that first opened as a radical prototype for a new mode of living in the city and how this vision of the future appeared in retrospect. At first, every unit's interior was nearly identical, owing to the capsule architecture's mass production, but I discovered that while some of the units retained original details, many others displayed a variety of modifications that had been performed over the years. There were

even capsules that were no longer habitable because of neglect and the limits of the building's design.

In my photographs of the capsule tower, the various conditions of the units pointed to the passage of time while also showcasing how Kurokawa's vision of the future aged. My pictures captured the individuality present in each capsule; the accumulation of objects attests to the lives of the people who resided there. The photographs also capture how the building persevered, even as the rest of the city followed a different path and rendered it obsolete.

The Nakagin Capsule Tower ultimately achieved a significance that its architect could not have foreseen half a century ago. It became something other than what Metabolist futurism promised, taking on a life of its own. For a time, the building lived a unique and irreplaceable existence in the city.

Noritaka Minami, a visual artist based in Chicago, photographed the Nakagin Capsule Tower from 2010 to 2021.

Minami's photographs of capsule interiors included here were taken between 2012 and 2021. Additional images appear in his 2015 photo book *1972*.



NORITAKA MINAMI



NORITAKA MINAMI



NORITAKA MINAMI



NORITAKA MINAMI



NORITAKA MINAMI



NORITAKA MINAMI

FALA FINDS A HOME IN GINZA

On a warm September evening ten years ago, we couldn’t have known how important our chance meeting with Kenzo Fukuda, a Japanese fish broker, would be. By 2012, the informal public and disciplinary debate about the Nakagin Capsule Tower had been going on for some time. Architects like Toyo Ito and even Kisho Kurokawa himself were pro-demolition: After all, that would have been the Metabolists’ response. A few other voices, perhaps more detached from the original 1960s group or just imbued with a nostalgic feeling they had difficulty expressing in Japan’s fast-paced society, suggested preservation. That night, we had no opinion on the topic: We were excited because we had just arrived in Tokyo and we were going to visit one of the must-see projects from our list of archi-tourist destinations.

The building in front of us was not the one we were promised by the books we read. The pristine white capsules were now gray, old, damaged structures. Patches were everywhere, with signs of corrosion and water leaks hiding in plain sight. Of all the circular windows, only half a dozen were illuminated. The convenience shop on the street level didn’t belong to any of the usual bigger chains in the city, and it had goodies we couldn’t find anywhere else. We didn’t notice any of these details. Instead, we saw the Nakagin we wanted to see.

We had no plan other than just acting casual and sneaking inside, as architects often do. The security guy kicked us out right away, but in those seconds of trespassing, the right tower elevator opened and Fukuda, the fish broker who happened to be the building’s only English speaker, showed some interest in our plight. “Why do people insist on visiting this old building?” he asked. We improvised: “We’re looking for a place to live.”

It’s true that we already had a place to stay, a tiny room with no windows in a shared house a bit far from the “center”

near Honkomagome. Fukuda countered: “I think I have a friend with a capsule to rent. Do you want to visit?” We instinctively answered yes. But could we really live there?

A few minutes later, we were in Fukuda’s capsule, where several dust-covered winter coats hung above his sofa, which was also his bed. The furniture seemed lifted from an antique shop, and the TV played a noisy talk show. Invoices, receipts, and other papers were glued all over the walls, evidence that the room served as his office during the day. He warned us right away that “the building was old, and there was no hot water.”

We visited capsule B806 the next day. The floor still had the original blue carpet, and the famous wall cabinet was nearly intact. The bathroom was as advertised: Without hot water, occupants took scheduled showers in a dedicated prefabricated unit on the ground floor. Okamoto-san, our soon-to-be landlord, was so surprised by our interest that he gave us a special price and almost felt bad for renting the capsule to us. Suddenly we were living in Ginza, supposedly one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the world, in our own “apartment” for less than 300 euros a month. Sometimes you just get lucky.

For the year that followed, capsule B806 was our home, office, and headquarters. Fala atelier was founded there, inspirational images were pinned up, guests passed through, photographers captured wonders, myths were clarified, and articles were written. In our eyes, it was a lively building. Our neighbors were funny: From the yakuza next door, who specialized in selling Hello Kitty dolls and sex toys, to a couple who owned the only fully preserved capsule along with its memorabilia, we could find all kinds of stories. Tatsuyuki Maeda-san, who became one of the biggest advocates for the building’s preservation, had just finished refurbishing his first capsule (including an

unexpected wood floor) and was on his way to owning and refurbishing another ten units in the following years. Communication was difficult, but with some help we managed to interview many residents, document their capsules, and hear their stories.

The building clearly had serious problems from the start. It had been a “bluff” project, a real estate stunt, that could have also led to a future that never happened. Still, the futuristic capsules were built in a shipyard largely following traditional construction techniques. They were never truly meant to be replaced, and the project ended up not leading to others that could have indeed worked. The Tokyo public was sold a beautiful fiction that was never meant to happen. Kurokawa, always a provocateur, knew this the whole time.

In the 40 years before we arrived, the plumbing problems became evident, and maintenance was impossible, owing to the hidden placement of the water connections between the capsules and the core. Rather than being independent pods, they stacked vertically, making the removal of one capsule impossible.

The scars were everywhere: New pipes were exposed in the staircases, and sewer water dripped from the balconies. There were rotten capsules, populated with failing plastics and moss, whose doors had collapsed, leaving the interiors visible from the common stairs. One day we woke up to a construction team covering the building with a net to prevent falling pieces from striking anyone on the street. And we haven’t even mentioned the asbestos. The building was literally a crumbling ruin. Removal was the obvious solution; the only question was when.

It was difficult to express how we felt about it, but we made our first attempt in “The Metabolist Routine,” an essay for *Domus* 969 in 2013. Pre-Airbnb, we were the building’s first ever non-Japanese residents, and we made an effort to show it to

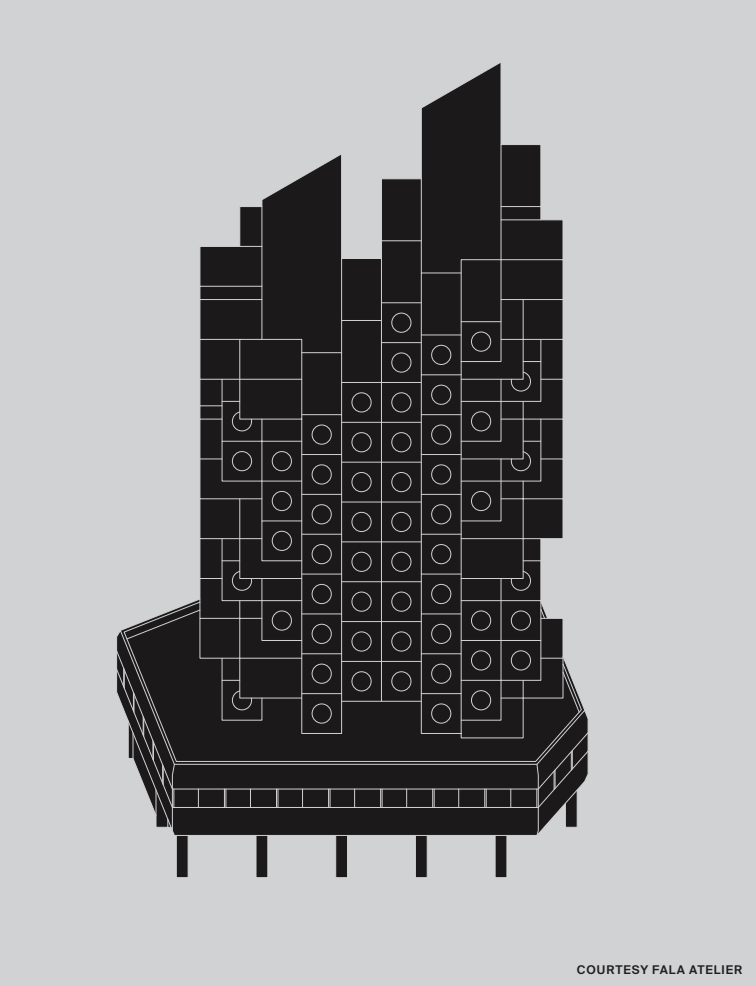
the world. Joseph Grima, the then editor of *Domus* who invited us to tell our story, summarized it best: “Everyone thinks they know the Nakagin, but no one knows how it is to live there, much less today.”

A few years later, we returned to Tokyo and received a warm welcome from the remaining inhabitants, mostly because of our friendship, but also due to the media attention we achieved for the building. They even prepared a capsule for us to stay in for the summer.

Demolishing the Nakagin was a logical solution to a complex problem. The building was in terrible condition, and, though preservation schemes were pitched, no one proposed a (financially) viable alternative. Refurbishing the capsules was not possible, and restoring the tower as a monument would be conceptually insulting to the Metabolists. Classifying it as a historic structure was also complicated because of its futuristic appearance, even half a century after its completion. With deconstruction currently underway, years of speculation have finally come to an end. What was once the tallest building in the neighborhood was quickly overshadowed by its context. Tokyo, which today is bigger than the Metabolists could have ever predicted, ended up absorbing the Nakagin into its relentless churn.

The last time we saw Kenzo Fukuda was in 2015. He lived and worked in the tower and enjoyed drinking every night. He liked us and showed us nice places to eat in the neighborhood. He was from a city a few hours away from Tokyo, where he would go on his motorbike (which we never saw) on the weekends. We were lucky to meet him, as he changed our lives. He was probably the best example of the new city nomad that Kurokawa talked about all those years ago.

Filipe Magalhães and Ana Luisa Soares founded fala atelier in capsule B806 of the Nakagin Capsule Tower in 2013.



COURTESY FALA ATELIER



FILIPE MAGALHÃES AND ANA LUISA SOARES

Left: An axonometric drawing of the tower completed by fala atelier.

Above: The tight quarters of capsule B806 was both home and office for fala atelier.

A SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

I first arrived in Japan fresh from the Royal College of Art with Astrid Klein in 1988 to work for Toyo Ito. We had both won travel scholarships and were drawn to Japan at the height of the economic bubble there—everything seemed possible, and the Nakagin Capsule Tower was one of the reasons why we wanted to travel to Tokyo.

When we first visited the Nakagin Capsule Tower, it was already in a poor state of repair. Even then, it already seemed inevitable that it was going to be demolished in the future. In the West, certainly in Europe, when you build a building, you want to make it from brick and stone, and it's there for centuries. That's different from ideas about architecture in Japan, where buildings were traditionally made from wood and disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, and fires have led to a widely held notion of impermanence.

With this design, the idea was that the

capsules would be taken off and replaced every 25 years. There was even a counter-weighted extractor “tool” envisioned so old units could be unplugged. This never happened, and as it was impossible to maintain the spaces between the pods, they started rusting and leaking over the years. Complex asbestos uses also complicated any idea of renovation.

Still, the fact that it got built was fantastic. It was possible in Japan only at this time of expansion and optimism. This was the future city!

Kisho Kurokawa once said, “True beauty lies in things that die, things that change.” That's really the essence of the Metabolist movement, so he probably would have no issue that the building reached its end of life.

Recently I've been visiting the Nakagin Capsule Tower regularly to document its demolition. The project still holds reverence

for Japanese architects, so there's been a decent amount of news and loads of people showing up to take pictures of the deconstruction process. It really proves it's one of Tokyo's most iconic buildings.

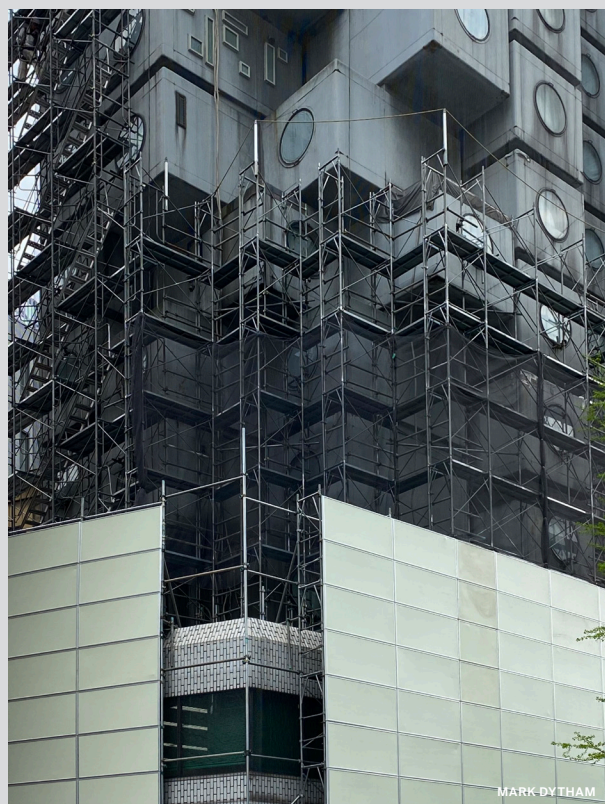
At Klein Dytham architecture, we have built several projects in Tokyo that already don't exist anymore. But I'm glad we pushed the envelope and that they were realized in their time. It's important to experiment and take ideas beyond what often is financially or practically viable. I'm not worried about longevity as long as things stand up and make sense for the time in which they exist. I think we worry a bit too much about permanence in the West. One might argue that constant rebuilding is not sustainable; however, everything gets meticulously recycled in Japan.

Metabolist ideas inspired high-tech architecture like the Centre Pompidou, so I'm interested to see what happens to our own European high-tech icons. What would

people say if the Pompidou or Richard Rogers's Lloyd's building were being ripped down? It raises lots of questions for high-tech. This was the start of it, in a way: What's more high-tech than steel boxes clipping onto a concrete core?

This is one of those projects that was so much better for being built and failing, because it would have been a failure if it hadn't been built. Because it was built, because there were failures, and because we learned from them, it changed architecture.

Mark Dytham runs the Tokyo-based firm Klein Dytham architecture with business partner Astrid Klein. They are also the founders of PechaKucha, a 20x20 show-and-tell format active in 1,280 cities globally.



This spring, demolition of the Nakagin Capsule Tower's podium commenced, and scaffolding and noise barriers rose around the building. The spectacle drew onlookers, who stopped to take pictures. On one visit, Dytham saw a street artist documenting the tower with watercolors.



40 Focus

AN FOCUS

June 2022

Windows, Walls & Doors

IWAN BAAN

Flexibility and adaptability are the heroes of this special section. Operable window and wall products allow spaces to transform as needed, while new patterns, colorways, and finishes provide designers with unprecedented options to enhance interiors. On the following pages you'll find projects and products expertly designed to cater to the dynamic spaces that have quickly become sought after in today's postpandemic world.



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42 Case Study

AN FOCUS

June 2022

Open, Closed, and In-Between

A dormitory in Switzerland by Kengo Kuma & Associates threads a public pathway across its gridded facade of operable windows and shutters.



Architect: Kengo Kuma & Associates
Location: Geneva

Local architect: CCHE
Project management: IHEID The Graduate Institute
Structure: 2M Ingénierie Civile SA
Landscape: EMF Paisatge
Lighting design: Light IQ
Facade consultant: Sottas SA
Contractor: Complex Bau
MEP: Weinmann.Energies
Electricity: SRG Engineering-Scherler SA

Featuring a stepped promenade that cuts through an otherwise uniform grid of operable screened windows, Kengo Kuma & Associates' (KKAA) residences for students at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva challenges the separation of public and private spaces of a traditional dormitory. Rather than reserving the ground floor for public spaces and sequestering student rooms on upper floors, the promenade of this approximately 330,000-square-foot building allows for shared access up through the building to its rooftop via a common circulation route.

KKAA partner in charge Javier Villar Ruiz described the intended effect as creating a sense of community for students who arrive from around the world to study in Geneva. In particular, the design avoids circulation that is overly reliant on elevators. By providing public access through this single route, the promenade brings visitors, workers, and other members of the public through the dormitory in the same way that students enter and exit the building, breaking the isolation that many dormitories and campuses have from their surrounding communities.

To keep the promenade open across floors, KKAA's design team worked with the project's engineers to keep the space free from structural and mechanical elements. The floors above the open promenade cantilever overhead for nearly ten feet in most loca-



43 Case Study

tions; the longest span is about 17 feet. This posed a structural challenge, but because the apartments were realized in a modular assembly, the shared walls were used as “wall beams” to support the cantilevers, Villar Ruiz told *AN*. Showers and restrooms were placed in the back of apartments to keep the promenade free of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing elements.

The 700 student apartments, each just over 9 feet wide, follow a strict grid. From the exterior, the building’s surfaces are defined by the large expanses of its operable facade. Each apartment has two windows covered by four foldable metal mesh screens, “conceived to be coherent at all scales,” Villar Ruiz said. Students can open windows for air circulation and, separately, adjust the outer screen for shading.

The design team initially wanted to shift the screens’ permeability across the facade according to solar radiation analysis, but this was not permitted by Swiss regulations. Villar Ruiz cited the uniformity of the elevations as being crucial in the goal of inviting the public up to the roof. The pattern of open and closed shutters varies with the seasons and the time of day, creating a shifting expression of collective student life. Villar Ruiz described this effect as “crisp, clear, and Cartesian” in the morning, with “ever-changing” shadows emerging throughout the day as students adjust their windows.

Conversations about whether to make the windows motorized or manually operable went on for months. After the client, KKAA, and local architects CCHE visited several sites to inspect options, a manually operable window manufactured locally by Sottas was selected. Material decisions were also not finalized until later in the design process, as aesthetic desires were complicated by national energy regulations. After constructing a series of partial mock-ups, a final full mock-up of one module, about 9 feet wide and almost 11 feet high, was fabricated, tested, and adjusted accordingly.

The finalization of the modules late in the design process was possible only because of the uniformity of modules across most of the facade. After fabrication, installation was completed quickly. The modules contained three parts: wall with insulation, glazing elements, and operable metal screen shutters. Wall installation was “straightforward,” according to Villar Ruiz, though finding a glazing manufacturer posed challenges. It was not easy to find a fabricator that would meet the specification for a fixed bottom portion, allowing “clean” views when seated, and the operable upper portion without further division in the grid design. Furthermore, the off-size width and the weight of both the triple glazing and shutters complicated the hinging mechanisms that enable operability. Still, a solution was found, and the project benefits from the architects’ dedication to the rigorous expression of this operable facade. **Chris Walton**

Facing page, clockwise from top: The campus’s buildings are outfitted with folding metal mesh shutters; the retracted metal shutters; the architects specified triple glazing manufacturers by Sottas SA; the operable screens cast shadows on the elevations

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Operable Openings

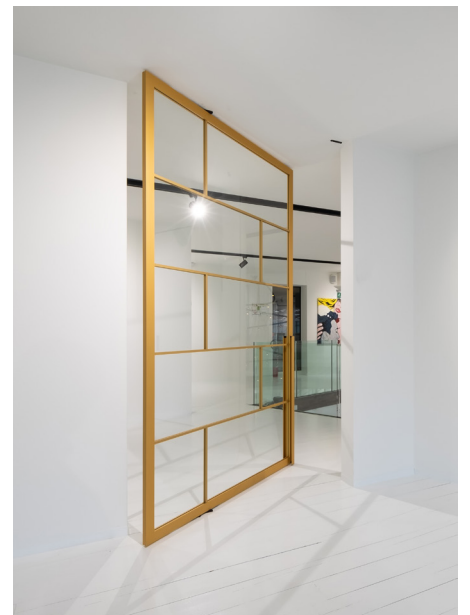
These products challenge the traditional distinction between windows and doors by providing flexibility of entrance and egress while also making a case for visibility and natural light. From operable window walls to statement-making pivot doors to thoughtfully crafted window treatments, these openings provide options while maintaining the design integrity of your project. *Sophie Aliece Hollis*



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– Tyler Jones, CEO and founder, Blue Heron



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Hardware

To ensure the safety and security of any building opening, the proper hardware is essential. Whether visible or operating incognito, these handles, locks, and door systems provide smooth and secure access for a range of egress needs. Sophie Aliece Hollis



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Halo Wi-Fi Enabled Smart Door Lock
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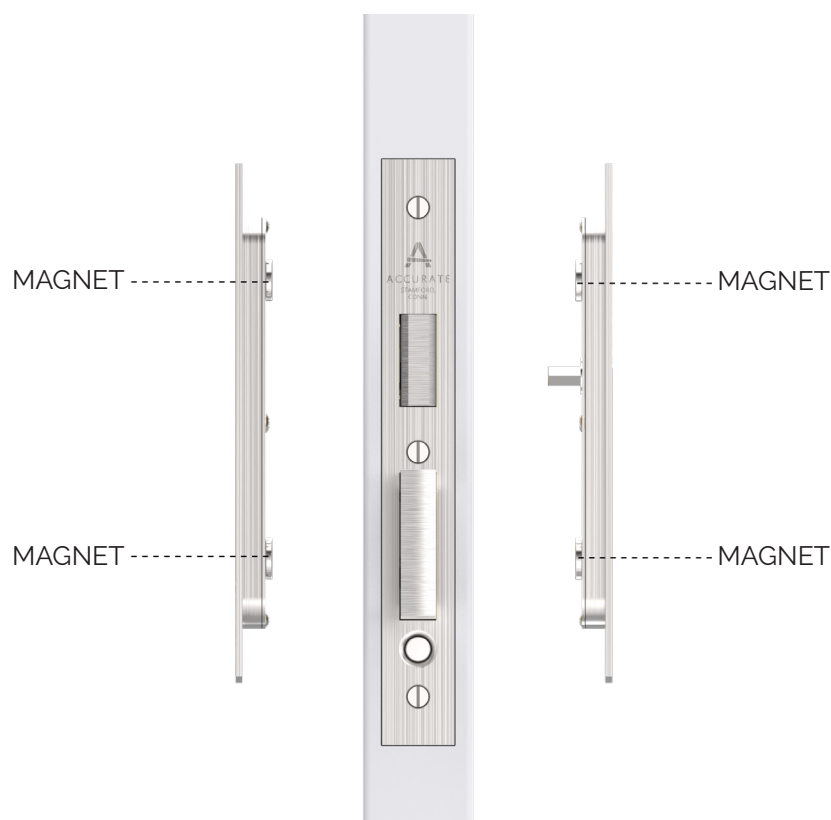
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48 Case Study

A'N FOCUS

June 2022

On a Clear Day

LMN Architects' Lakeview Office Building enters the Kirkland, Washington, scene with mass timber and an operable glass curtain wall.

Architect: LMN Architects

Location: Kirkland, Washington

Structural and civil engineer: Coughlin Porter Lundeen, Inc.

Landscape architect: Hewitt Architects

Lighting design: Fisher Marantz Stone

MEP engineer: Rushing

General contractor: Sierra Construction

Timber fabricator and installer: StructureCraft

Envelope: Morrison Hershfield

Signage: Studio Matthews

Commissioning: Glumac

Last November, LMN Architects celebrated the completion of its Lakeview Office Building. Built for the Bill Gates-owned firm Cascade Investment, the project occupies an idyllic setting in Kirkland, Washington, just a stone's throw from Lake Washington. It responds to its context with a mass timber structure enclosed within a custom-designed glass curtain wall

facade with operable windows.

The triangular site is considered something of a gateway into Kirkland, so it was imperative to the design team that the building similarly act as such. "The site is a unique shape, and the design corresponds to that," noted LMN Architects partner Pamela Trevithick. "The curve on the west side responds to the shape of the site and maximizes views to Lake Washington."

The 48,000-square-foot project is the first mass timber office development east of Greater Seattle and includes two levels of office space, with two levels of underground parking. The client, influenced by other mass timber projects such as T3 in Minneapolis, was keen to incorporate the material within the design. It also pushed for abundant landscaping on the roof, a feature that required an amendment to the municipality's zoning code. The mass timber components were fabricated and installed by the Vancouver area-based

firm StructureCraft and consist of a Douglas fir glulam post-and-beam frame and dowel-laminated timber (DLT) floor and roof panels. This kit-of-parts approach, supported by StructureCraft's intensive design-assist process, facilitated a rapid structural installation: The process took just over a month.

With the structure in place, the team moved forward with the installation of the building envelope. The curtain wall was manufactured in a collaboration between EFCO and subcontractor Mission Glass with the assistance of facade consultant Morrison Hershfield. Each of the curtain wall panels measures 5 feet wide and is arranged in 20-foot modules. Jeremy Schoenfeld, associate with LMN Architects, explained that they "had written a more open-ended spec for the project, which noted that [they] wanted a four-sided, structurally glazed, zero-sight-line curtain wall system with operable vents. The Washington State Energy Code really pushes you to create a

tight envelope and glazing percentages are limited, and highly reflective vision glass at the spandrel helped [them] maintain that total glazing look while mitigating solar gain."

The curtain wall system is not dissimilar to that deployed for a standard concrete building; the panels are fastened to straight steel angles placed atop the DLT floor panels. The operable vents are embedded within the panels and arranged so that each standard 10-foot-wide office module has one.

For the large opening that connects the building's interior to the rooftop garden, the design team opted for a monumentally scaled NanaWall folding door system, which opens to the elevated patio with views of Lake Washington beyond.

Robinhood, the Bay Area-based financial services company, is set to occupy the building. **Matthew Marani**



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Far left: The two-story curtain wall integrates operable vents.

Above: The building's west elevation is curved to maximize views of Lake Washington.

Left: A NanaWall folding door system opens to the rooftop deck, surrounding garden, and the expansive horizon beyond.



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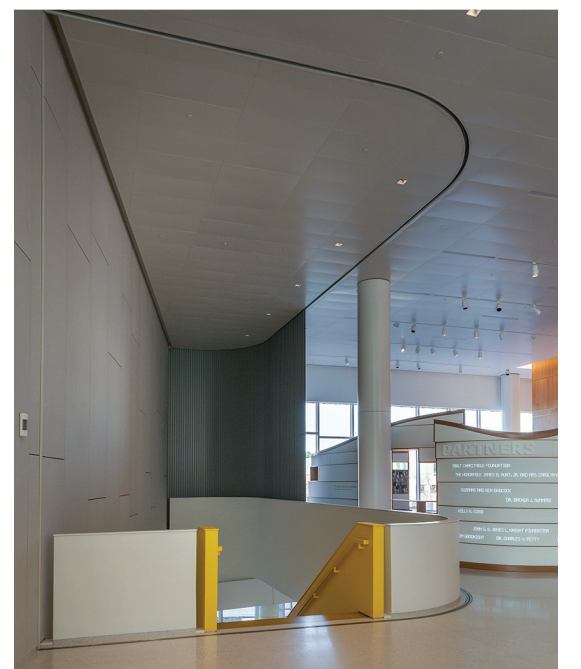
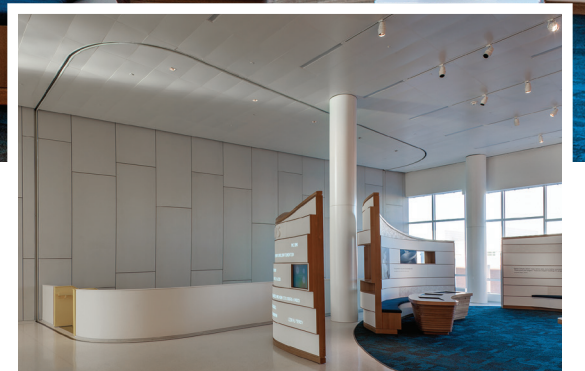
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Turning Inward

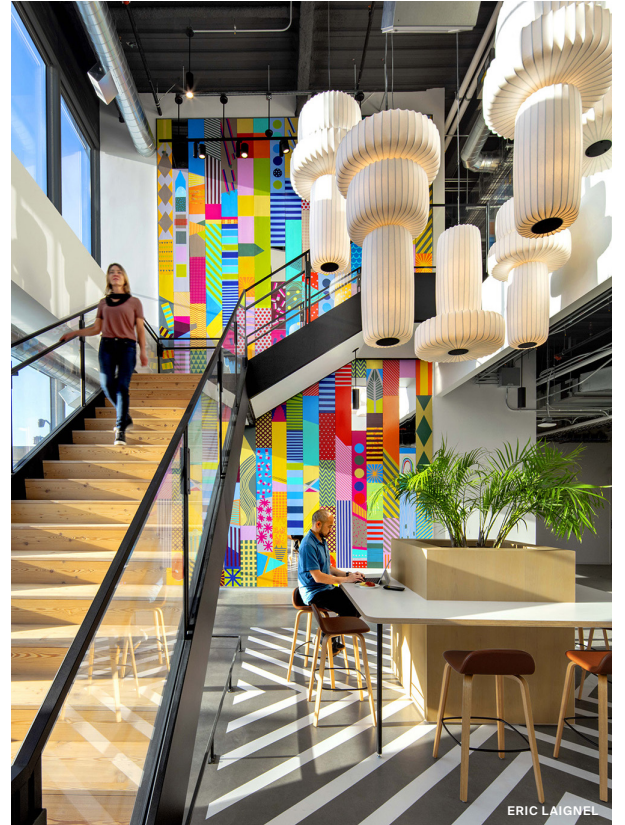
In its new headquarters in San Francisco's Mission Bay district, Uber focuses on the needs of its employees.



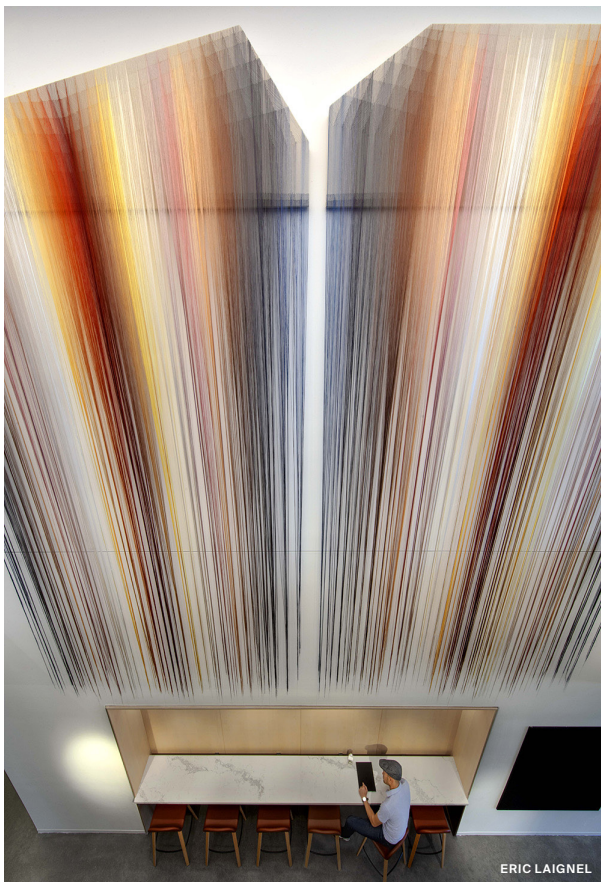
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Uber Headquarters, Mission Bay Buildings 3 and 4

Interiors: Huntsman Architectural Group
Location: San Francisco

Architect: Pfau Long (a Perkins&Will company)
General contractor: DPR Construction
MEP engineer and lighting: AlfaTech
Acoustics: Salter
Landscape: SWA Group
Structural engineer: Thornton Tomasetti
Woodwork: Montbleau
Sustainability: Stok, SSR
Art: Keehn On Art
Graphics: THERE
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In early March, *Super Pumped: The Battle for Uber*, a dramatization of the start-up's disgraced disrupter-in-chief Travis Kalanick, premiered on Showtime. The series' flashy set pieces have their basis in news reports about the toxic work environment Kalanick and his close associates oversaw at Uber's Market Street campus. Under pressure from investors, he stepped down as CEO in 2017, and executive team members quickly set about repairing the company's image.

The push started with its own offices. Looking for a fresh start, Uber acquired four semi-adjacent lots in the Mission Bay district and tapped the local office of architecture and interiors firm Huntsman to develop a unifying master plan. "When we got involved, they were in a real transition," Alison Woolf, associate principal at Huntsman, told AN. "They were looking to emphasize their employees and the connectivity between them."

Aligned north to south along 3rd Street, the buildings are grouped in pairs and separated by a cross street. Buildings 1 and 2, designed by SHoP Architects, are glazed blocks connected by crisscrossing pedestrian bridges and feature accordion windows that, when opened, lend the envelope a prismatic shimmer.

By contrast, Buildings 3 and 4, which share a plaza with Chase Center, home of the Golden State Warriors, are more traditional developer fare. What's notable about the pair is the wealth of densely woven programs, ranging from retail and care rooms to a yoga studio and outdoor terraces, that characterize their interiors. Floor plates are broken up into "neighborhoods" populated by various Uber teams; they are identified by proprietary color schemes

and graphic patterns. Yet, as capably realized as these open offices are, they can't match the punchy sensibility of the auxiliary spaces.

In section, the 11-story structures appear to devote as much real estate (584,000 square feet in total) to work as they do to nonwork activities. According to Woolf, there are close to 30 break rooms across the buildings, each one outfitted with a different decorative scheme. Numerous cafes and snacking stations supplement a full-service cafeteria and a food pop-up program. Wood-paneled bleachers offer a natural point for assembly and socializing, while lounges double as spaces for self-directed work. Employees are given laptops, allowing them to stretch their legs and float from home base to the top-floor "chill space" or seventh-floor library, with pit stops at juice or coffee bars on the way.

Smart material choices, artworks, and eclectic touches (a dichroic glass ceiling and a programmable "sky"-light from TLS) identify each of these programs, which often span multiple stories. "We created as many punch-throughs as we could, which create openings for staircases and the bleachers, as well as art pieces and reception desks," said Woolf. "It

also helps connect with what's happening in the SHoP buildings."

Uber's Mission Bay campus opened last year, but the buildings remain at partial capacity. Nevertheless, Woolf attests to a change in the company culture; evidently, many of the staffers in Buildings 3 and 4 are spending a lot of time on the terraces, which are planted with berms to block the city's consistent wind. The outdoor space "shows some forethought on Uber's part," she said. "The terrace and the social areas not only are COVID ready, but they also make the office a much more spatially interesting place to be. Everything is geared toward staff." **Samuel Medina**

Clockwise from top left: Reception coffee bar; reception seating from Carl Hansen and Skagerak, among others; custom-commissioned art by Leah Rosenberg; the Wellness Suite; bleachers areas with programmable TLS Lumicloud Bespoke Vega ceiling; a threaded art work by Nike Schroeder that spans two floors



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Partitions

The pandemic introduced us to the haphazard installation of roughly cut Plexiglas as dividers between workspaces or seating areas. Far from this emergency intervention, the following partition solutions have been designed with style and function in mind, allowing for swift and elegant spatial reorganization. **Sophie Aliece Hollis**



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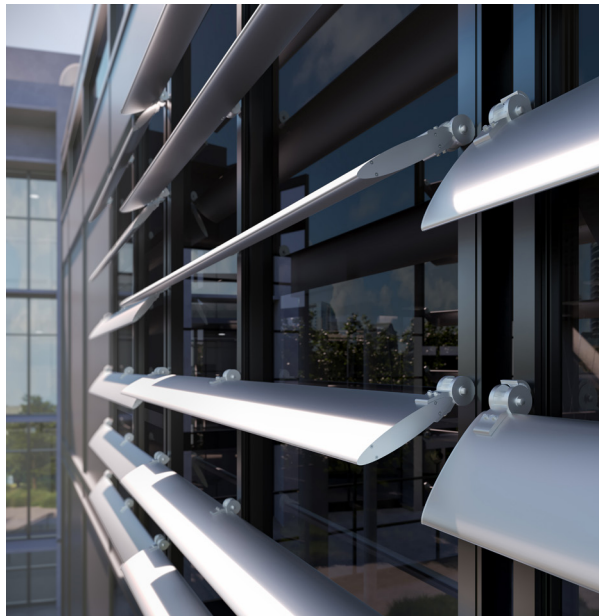
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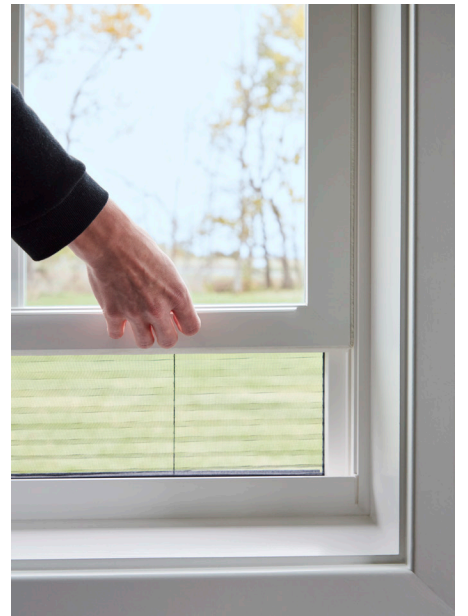
Appropriate lighting is crucial to the success of any space and often requires additional design elements to maintain even illumination in even the most thoughtful of designs. These solar shading products, both fixed and operable, provide elegant shading solutions to permit the proper daylight levels for any occasion. Sophie Aliece Hollis



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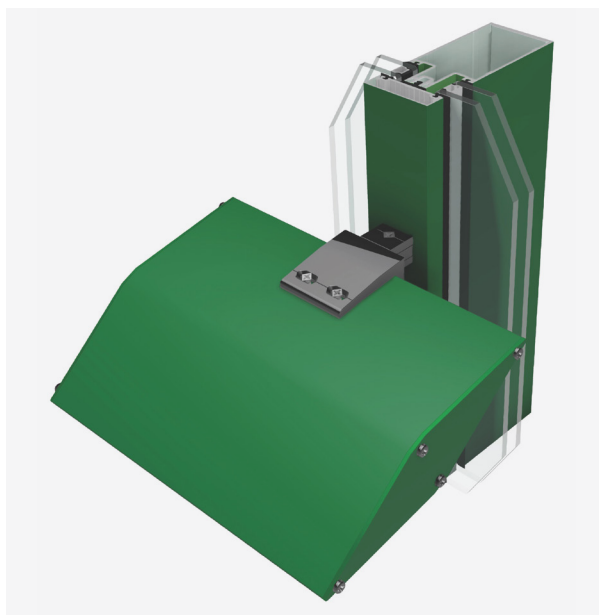
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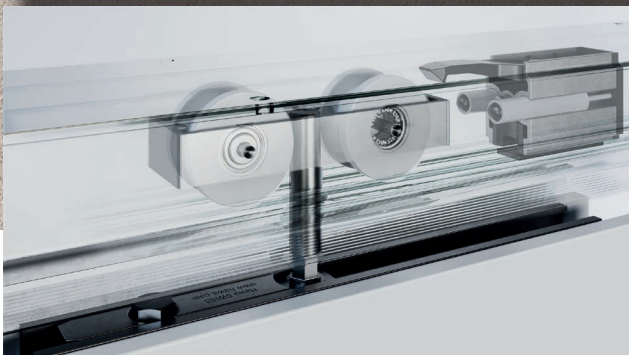
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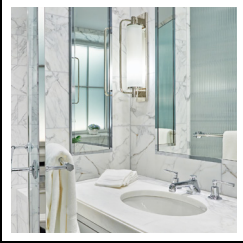



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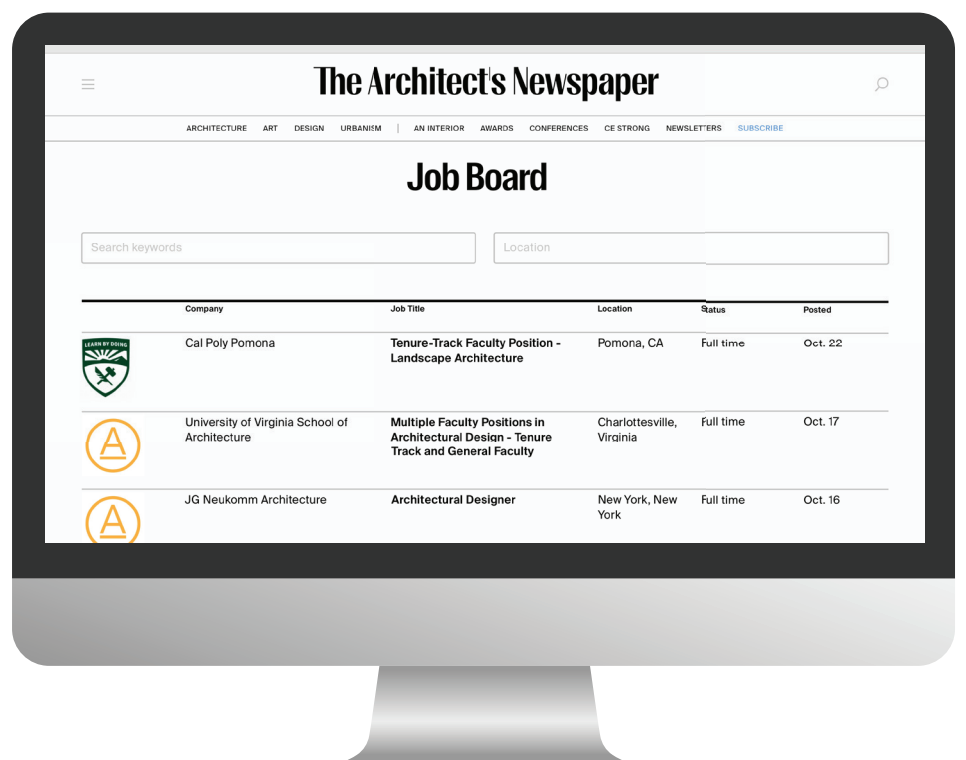


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62 Highlights

East

Now What?! Advocacy, Activism & Alliances in American Architecture Since 1968

Boston Society of Architects Open through September 30
290 Congress St., Ste. 200, Boston, MA 02210



Ninety sixty-eight was a pivotal year for America, but at the AIA convention that June, civil rights leader Whitney Young Jr. accused architects of a “thunderous silence” when faced with the deep turmoil of that era. In the 54 years since, the criticism has been repeated at regular intervals. *Now What?!* challenges this narrative with drastic results as it powerfully showcases how architects have supported the advance of civil rights, feminist, and LGBTQ+ causes. Curated by Lori A. Brown, Andrea J.

Merrett, Sarah Rafson, and Roberta Washington and realized in partnership with ArchiteXX, a nonprofit organization promoting gender equity in architecture, this installation in Boston—the show’s 12th so far—includes a section featuring local changemakers like Gregory Minott, cofounder and managing principal at DREAM Collaborative. Colorful supergraphics and interactive features invite visitors to join in the ongoing work of constructing an inclusive profession. **Jack Murphy**

Southeast

Full Circle: Design without End

Museum of Design Atlanta Open through September 25
1315 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30309



That a building is a static, dumb object is only superficially true. The steel and glass of a curtain wall cannot willfully disaggregate from one another, nor enact revenge on the architect who facilitated their union. But seen another way, these material assemblages are temporary amalgams in a long energetic chain of alternating composition and decomposition. In recent years, designers working in an ecological vein have fashioned concepts that help to better grasp the impact their creations have on their surroundings and farther afield.

Curated by Laura Flusche and Veronica Klucik, *Full Circle* showcases systems (e.g., Cradle2Cradle, Living Building) that integrate a “regenerative” approach to design. The argument is substantiated by case studies, including a BIG-designed waste-to-energy power plant in Copenhagen and, closer to home, the Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design at Georgia Tech by Lord Aeck Sargent. **Samuel Medina**

Midwest

Energy Revolution

Chicago Architecture Center Open through October 17
111 East Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL 60601



Compared with *Full Circle* in Atlanta, *Energy Revolution*, the largest exhibition in the CAC’s history, is heavy on exposition; the exhibition design, by Farr Associates, is characterized by towering walls of texts (in English and Spanish) and infographics foretelling the bleak world ahead should the building industry fail to course-correct in time. But where the arc threatens to become overly didactic, full-size building mock-ups and other attractions offer tangible moments of experience. In an inspired

move, the show, staged within the CAC’s permanent *Building Tall* display, makes partial use of the scaled-down skyscrapers that dot the gallery floor: Infrared analysis, projected onto a model of 875 North Michigan Avenue (a.k.a. the John Hancock Center), reveals the extent to which modernist office slabs—so emblematic of Chicagoan modernity—are energy guzzlers. But lest it leave visitors on a despairing note, the show offers numerous ways to retrofit the problem away. **SM**

West

Venting the Earth: Looking at Geothermal Energy

The Center for Land Use Interpretation Open through August
9331 Venice Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232



Geothermal energy accounts for less than 0.5 percent of national energy production, but 70 percent of this activity takes place in California. (Next up is Nevada, which accounts for 25 percent.) *Venting the Earth* explores a handful of Californian sites to stage a portrait of the structures and infrastructures of the geothermal industry. At the Geysers Geothermal Field in the northern part of the state, a decline in output necessitated that two pipelines, which snake across the hilly landscape, replenish groundwater in

order for it to be heated with wastewater from nearby communities. Around the Salton Sea, thought to be the largest domestic source of lithium, companies are exploring ways to extract it from the groundwater used in geothermal production. The installation continues the CLUI’s mission, pursued since 1994, of disseminating knowledge about American lands. It operates under the belief that the “manmade landscape is a cultural inscription that can be read to better understand who we are, and what we are doing.” **JM**

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64 Review

Critique of Architecture: Essays on Theory, Autonomy, and Political Economy

By Douglas Spencer | Birkhäuser | \$35



New York City's Fulton Street subway station

Many commentators over the past couple decades have enthusiastically heralded the arrival of a “postcritical” age in art and architecture. Gone is the imperative to question the existing state of affairs, particularly in the latter field, where it is dismissed as inimical to the practice of building. Criticism is considered gloomy and elitist, even superfluous. Under the influence of theorists like Bruno Latour, Jane Bennett, and Jacques Rancière, and their epigones in the architectural academe, practitioners have learned to embrace the world as it is.

Douglas Spencer's *Critique of Architecture* confronts this trend head on. Opposed to the prevailing postcritical mood, the essays seek to ascertain architecture's role in the capitalist mode of production as presently configured. In that sense, the book shares elements with its predecessor, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism* (2016). With both projects, Spencer hopes to rehabilitate a critical orientation toward the discipline; this orientation, moreover, has an explicitly Marxist bent. “After a now decades-long period of assault on critical theory,” he writes, “discussions of class, labor, and capital sit uneasily within what currently passes for theoretical discourse.”

Critique of Architecture opens with a blistering polemic, first published in 2012, against what Spencer calls “architectural Deleuzism.” For him, it refers to architects' widespread appropriation of concepts from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (along with his collaborator, Félix Guattari) starting in the late '90s. Buzzwords such as “the fold” and “smooth space” began to appear in architecture journals, lifted straight from the pages of *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Leibniz and the Baroque*. Unlike the old semiotic paradigm it displaced, from postmodern playfulness to Derrida-inspired deconstructivism, Deleuze's various figures of thought were felt to be eminently translatable to design. Even further, by mere dint of its philosophical derivation, any building that invoked these concepts (cf. the works of Patrik Schumacher and Alejandro Zaera-Polo) was seen to possess a halo of radicalism. To Spencer, however, the Deleuzist dispensation in architecture belied a very real complicity with the prerogatives of neoliberal capitalism.

Spencer's second essay, “Habitats for *homo economicus*,” extends the confluence between neoliberalism and design back a few more decades. During the '60s and '70s, systematists such as the polymath Buckminster Fuller and his protégé John McHale proposed “environmental” solutions to the problem of human habitation, as did the landscape architect Ian McHarg. Nature and culture were bound together by a fundamental harmony, they argued, beyond the reach of obsolete 19th-century—i.e., capitalist or socialist—worldviews. Humanity, or “Man,” had only to be properly calibrated in order to maximize its performance. Yet as Spencer makes clear, this conception of nature was itself highly ideological: “The turn to computation, the technological fix, is not against nature because nature is conceived ... as a preprogrammed, essentially cybernetic and universal, system.” According to Spencer, the ecological perspective served to naturalize market processes, and the Californian ideology, as promulgated by Reyner Banham, helped to grease the wheels.

In the seventh chapter, Spencer traces discrete aspects of this shift in architectural thinking to the entrepreneurial élan of West Coast counterculture. Indeed, it was Banham's hip “cowboy nomad” lifestyle and countercultural credibility that allowed him to give voice to the newfound sense of freedom that emerged around this time. Generally speaking, Spencer is excellent at teasing out the ways left-wing gestures of rebellion were seamlessly incorporated into capitalism's fold. He recognizes the “repertoire of May 1968” in architects' protests against the administrative state. Participatory conduct, ad hoc improvisation, spontaneity, openness—all these values were held up as innately radical. While Spencer is generous to the originally disruptive intent of thinkers like Deleuze and Guattari, whose ideas he feels were misunderstood by architects, their affirmationism lent itself to neoliberal cooptation. Likewise, the notion of “everyday life” promoted by Henri Lefebvre and the Situationist International was laundered by the likes of Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers at their megastructural Centre Pompidou.

In the sixth chapter, Spencer tackles a key injunction from the rhetorical strategy of postcritique: “don't think, feel.” Philosophies of affect tend to denigrate rationality, preferring the immediacy of sensuous experience to critical reflection. Sylvia Lavin, Jeffrey Kipnis, and other architectural theorists who stress the affective dimension similarly hold that thinking too much about buildings misses the point, which is to let the structure wash over you. (Lavin's *Kissing Architecture* is exemplary in this regard.) “Cognitive disinvestment,” as Spencer dubs it, occurs whenever self-reflective subjectivity is removed from the equation and the use of architecture becomes unthinking and automatic. Feeling is valorized at the expense of thought. Once again, *Critique of Architecture* contends, this is in lockstep with the overarching logic of late capitalism.

Chapter 8 deals with actor-network theory and its architectural resonances. Latour, one of the postcritical thinkers mentioned at the outset, outlined some of the theory's implications for a philosophy of design in a keynote lecture. By distributing agency more broadly, and even attributing it to inanimate objects, he believes, the Promethean impulse of high modernism can be curbed. Modesty and humility are counterposed to modern arrogance. Things are able to act in themselves; they are not unidirectionally acted upon. Flat ontologies like Latour's do not distinguish between human and nonhuman actors, instead acknowledging a “parliament of things.” However, as Spencer reminds his readers, Marx already accounted for this anthropomorphosis in his famous analysis of commodity fetishism. Plus, Spencer adds, actor-network theory in architecture ignores “the biggest actor of them all: the ‘automatic subject’ that is capital.”

In the second half of the book, Spencer confronts some shortcomings of other oppositional orientations toward neoliberalism in architecture. Here he attempts to salvage the original intent behind these viewpoints. Spencer's pair of essays devoted to the writings of the Italian autonomist architect Pier Vittorio Aureli are superb. Although he confesses in an interview included at the book's end that he prefers Aureli to the odious ex-Marxist Schumacher, Spencer identifies severe limitations to his project of autonomy. In Aureli's view, the only hope for an autonomous architecture is to cut it off from the connectivity of the capitalist city. Drawing inspiration from mendicant societies, he puts forward an atavistic neo-Franciscanism as an alternative. Spencer convincingly discredits this proposal, citing Giacomo Todeschini's and Jacques Le Goff's research on the Franciscan order to show how its monasteries were historically integrated into the medieval urban money economy. Next, Spencer exposes the way Aureli relies on the Schmittian geopolitical binary of the island (the project) versus the sea (the market). Upholding the former against the latter, he reverts to an abstract negation.

The methodological core to the book is laid out in the penultimate chapter, “Architecture's Abode of Production,” an ex-

traordinarily dense but rewarding essay. For Spencer, it is high time to reevaluate the conceptual tools available to architectural criticism. Quoting the late theorist Moishe Postone, he states that materialist critics must move beyond the metaphor of base and superstructure. Each side—subject and object, economics and politics—is intrinsically related to the other. Moreover, he maintains that architecture plays an integral part in mediating between these poles: it does not just passively represent, but actively embodies, the contradictions of capitalism. On this basis, he criticizes the treatment of architecture in texts by Marxists as different as Fredric Jameson and Guy Debord. Jameson famously read the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles through a quasi-structuralist lens, as merely symptomatic of underlying transformations, while for Debord everything is reduced to representation, becoming its own spectacular hypostasis. Spencer leans on E. P. Thompson's critique of Louis Althusser in criticizing Jameson and Gilles Dauvé's critique of the Situationists in criticizing Debord, advancing instead a sophisticated dialectical interpretation.

In this sense *Critique of Architecture* marks a departure from *The Architecture of Neoliberalism*, which featured a somewhat appreciative appraisal of Jameson's canonical reading. Similarly, Spencer regards it as no longer sufficient to denounce buildings just for displaying properties associated with Debord's theory of spectacle (and this sets him apart from writers like Hal Foster and Gevork Hartoonian, with whom he otherwise has much in common). Better precedents can be found, Spencer alleges, in works by Theodor Adorno and Manfredo Tafuri. However, though he abhors the postcritical turn in contemporary architecture, and regards the flight to precritical romanticism à la Aureli as regressive, he does not want to retreat to a naively “pre-postcritical” standpoint. Put differently, he thinks it is not enough to simply fly the old battle standards of criticism.

For the most part, Spencer's critical instincts are good. He skillfully oscillates between analyzing programmatic statements by architects, architectural criticism, and the buildings themselves. (These vary widely, from the MAAT Museum in Lisbon and Ford's campus in Dearborn, Michigan, to a litany of subway stations, including London's Westminster Underground and the Fulton Transit Center in Lower Manhattan.) He is right to peel back the radical veneer with which architects have, since at least the '70s, wrapped their projects. But if architecture today is worse, this is due in no small measure to the fact that the world itself is worse, or at the very least has fewer prospects. A world where wealth takes the form of value, where labor is recompensed by wages, and where the products of labor appear as commodities impoverishes itself. Genuine Tafurian *Ideologiekritik*, of the sort Spencer has returned to lately, is necessary now as ever.

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65 Review

Modernity for the Masses: Antonio Bonet's Dreams for Buenos Aires

By Ana María León | University of Texas Press | \$50

ANTONIO BONET'S DREAMS FOR BUENOS AIRES



MODERNITY FOR THE MASSES

Ana María León

COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS

The book's cover features a photomontage of Bonet's design for the Barrio Sur housing complex.

Open Ana María León's *Modernity for the Masses: Antonio Bonet's Dreams for Buenos Aires* and you're as likely to encounter collages by German Argentine photographer Grete Stern or an abbreviated history of psychoanalysis in midcentury Argentina as you are to find anything about the book's titular character. We can read much of a country's history through its buildings and a lot about a man through his pathologies, León seems to say, but we also need to know when and how to look elsewhere. While *Modernity for the Masses* is indeed anchored by Bonet's architectural designs, León is careful to paint a full picture of the vast, complex cultural and political context from which they emerged.

Born in Barcelona in 1913, Antoni Bonet i Castellana belonged to a generation of cultural avant-gardists in Europe who believed the Americas to be a sort of tabula rasa. Architects of Bonet's stripe saw the Western Hemisphere as offering more

favorable conditions for practice: In 1938, he wrote to a colleague, "I want to start building, and you know here there is nothing to do." Buenos Aires had the added advantage of being culturally and climatically similar to Barcelona, and therefore was a place where he could feel almost at home. Off he went across the Atlantic.

León sets up this story deftly: Instead of starting with Bonet, she begins with Buenos Aires. *Modernity for the Masses* opens with an image of people—union members, protesters, young men—standing in a public fountain and calling for the freeing of Juan Domingo Perón, the temporarily embarrassed, imprisoned general who would later become president. The scene is one of political unrest and unknowability. León cites a newspaper headline that likens the protesters to cattle, as if the rural Argentine Pampas had invaded the burgeoning metropolis. She gives us the big picture, then Bonet storms in, grand plans in tow.

Grand plans for public housing, to be precise. As emigration from Europe and migration from the countryside into Buenos Aires swelled, throngs of people needed places to live. For the city's ruling class, the masses were also a well of revolutionary potential. Elite pressure to tame these unruly agents would come to inform all Bonet's public commissions, which, because they were intended to be financed by the state, catered to its political needs. León examines three housing schemes that were designed at radically different moments in modern Argentine history and, consequently, varied greatly in their political motivations, aims, and ultimate effects. Though she closely examines the architectural form of each scheme, León is more interested in the image—of a country, of a city, of a certain set of politics—the projects instrumentalized, and how Bonet, and his vanguard architecture group Austral, participated in that process.

Take Casa Amarilla, a project in the La Boca neighborhood designed during the conservative military dictatorship that lasted from 1943 to 1946. Architecturally, it followed the tenets of CIAM, while also building on other cultural currents that linked the *porteño* intelligentsia to European metropolises, particularly Barcelona and Paris. (Bonet had lived in the French capital working for Le Corbusier before leaving the continent.) According to León, with Casa Amarilla "social housing and the masses it was designed to contain were elevated to a monumental scale through a sculptural form that was literally lifted above its surroundings." Maps and architectural drawings reveal an almost grotesque monumentality, which, León notes, belied a more cynical aim: not to elevate the masses but, rather, to control them.

Modernity for the Masses is instructive in the way it clearly distinguishes between architectural aspirations and the actual (or potential) impact a building has in the world. With a keen, skeptical eye, León shows what comes of form when it mixes with structural and systemic forces. Try as architects might, they will never control the conditions in which their designs are built, nor those by which their creations are received.

The narrative continues with a pair of megalomaniacal projects, Bajo Belgrano (1948–49) and Barrio Sur (1956). They were variations on Bonet's plans for La Boca, only the scope had expanded; his architecture would project a clean, "civilized" modernity onto Buenos Aires more widely. As a vision statement for Perón's populist reign, Bajo Belgrano, with its orderly plan and immaculate plazas, represented a marked upgrade from the shabby public housing in which many working-class people had lived. Barrio Sur, designed during the tenure of the reactionary military regime that overthrew Perón a second time (both resilient and corrupt, he emerged for a third presidential term in the 1970s), employed the same formal orderliness but to different ends—not to house the working class but to displace them, to rid the city of

their presence. "Antiseptic quality is presented as civic virtue," León recounts.

Despite his avant-garde bona fides, Bonet, it seems, was agnostic as to who would ultimately fund his projects. At a 1975 conference in Santiago de Compostela, he blamed his lackluster building streak on the political "instability" of his adopted homeland, rather than any specific set of policies. Argentina, he said, had forfeited "its advanced position to Latin America" to Mexico and especially Brazil, "whose political stability, both in the democratic regime and during the dictatorship, has been notable." Brasília, instead of Buenos Aires, showed the way forward.

In Bonet's hands, the same architectural concepts, the same grand visions, could be used to appease and fulfill any interests, from those of a populist government to those of a right-wing dictatorship. He wasn't the first architect to indiscriminately peddle his services (Mies could count communists, fascists, and capitalists as clients), nor was he the last (remember Bjarke Ingels meeting with Bolsonaro?). But as told by León, Bonet's story serves as a prime example of the political malleability of avant-garde aesthetic ideas and of the particular susceptibility of architecture to being co-opted by political agendas. She makes clear that architecture, more than any other art, needs power to enact it.

In the end, none of Bonet's projects for Buenos Aires were ever built. Call it bad luck, poor timing, or something else. I call it a reminder that when it comes to building for the masses, we need fewer grand visions and more political will.

Marianela D'Aprile is a writer living in Brooklyn. Her work on architecture, politics, and culture has appeared in *Metropolis*, *Jacobin*, *ICON*, *The Nation*, and elsewhere. She sits on the board of The Architecture Lobby and is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America.

With two colleagues, Bonet founded the vanguard architecture group Austral.



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Can Architects Learn From Generative Art?

As conversations about NFTs proliferate, lessons about algorithmic collaboration abound.

continued from cover Hobbs's *Fidenza* series has made headlines for blowing up the digital art market and earning over \$177 million in secondary sales to date. The current lowest price for one edition of Hobbs's *Fidenza* is 66 Ethereum, or roughly \$183,000, putting the work's value on a par with high-priced artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and David Hockney.

Why is there a physical *Fidenza* mural on a garage wall in Marfa? Because Art Blocks facilitated Hobbs's generative project. Art Blocks is both a broker and a curator for code-based NFT artworks as well as a platform for facilitating specifically “on-chain” generative art projects. This means not just that these digital works are associated with blockchain transactions as a receipt of ownership, but that they use the blockchain transaction as a “seed” to generate an entirely unique composition. In the case of Hobbs's *Fidenza*, each purchase transaction (referred to as “minting”) generates a new composition whose features such as color palette, shape direction, and density are all controlled by an algorithm that filters parts of the transaction ID (the token) and uses it to change the parameters of the final output. Like a Kinder Egg surprise, buyers do not know what their *Fidenza* will look like until the transaction has gone through.

Part of this will not sound new to any architect or designer who has used parametric tools or programmed algorithms. Code-based design methods have been around since at least the 1960s and have experienced waves of popularity. In the late 1970s and early '80s, computer-generated art began to legitimize itself as a discipline, leading to publications such as *Computer Graphics and Art* magazine (1976–78) and Herbert Franke's *Computer Graphics, Computer Art* (1971). The aesthetics begotten by these experiments were geometric and entropic, as artists leveraged computation's ability to produce controlled yet unexpected effects. In this search for new visual forms and illusions, the computer became the artist's creative collaborator.

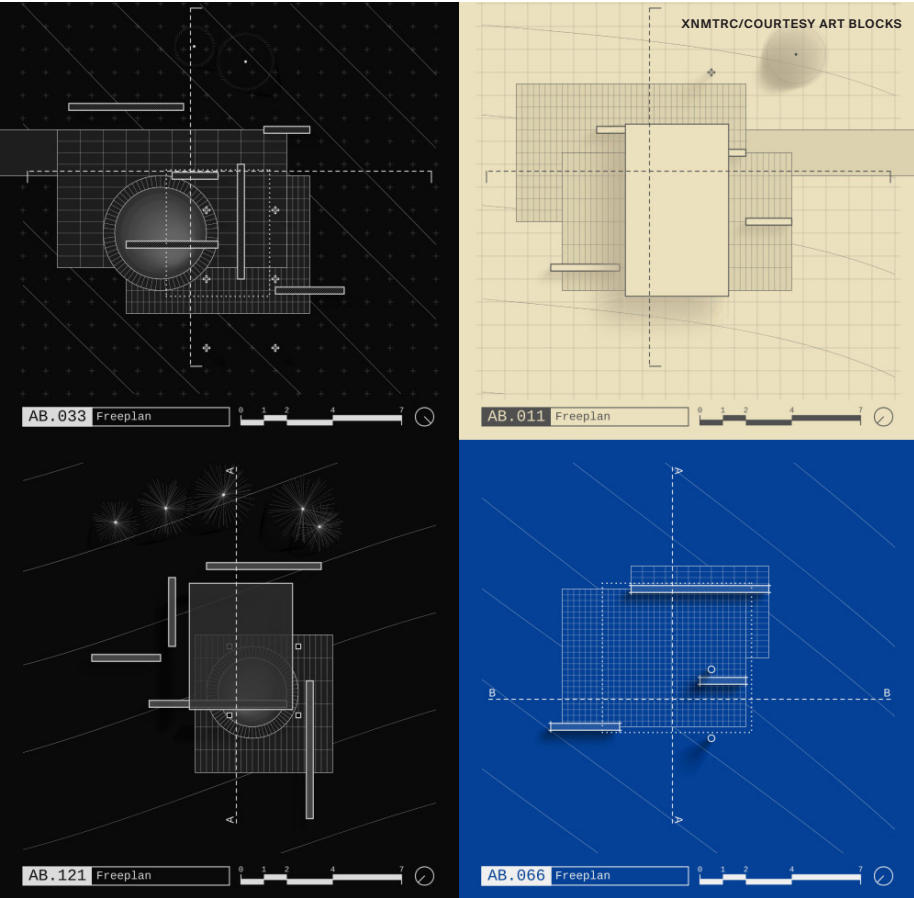
In the 1990s, Net Art (the movement that celebrated early internet aesthetics) somewhat overshadowed generative art, but it would undergo a resurgence in the post-2000 creative coding boom associated with DIY programming tools such as Processing and openFrameworks. These open-source initiatives introduced a new generation to visual

mathematics and the legacy of generative art, resulting in a group of artists focused on producing not just algorithmically driven artworks but also freely available tools and knowledge. Some architects embraced this new knowledge and collaborated with generative artists to explore the architectonics of computational methods, many of which were catalogued in the seminal 2010 book *Form+Code in Design, Art, and Architecture*, written by Casey Reas and Chandler McWilliams and published by Princeton Architectural Press.

Today's digital design methods are directly inherited from this lineage. Grasshopper and other parametric design tools packaged popular techniques into their interfaces and produced workflows for generating architectural elements from triangulation, geometry packing, and recursive algorithms. Eventually, what characterized the parametric turn of the early 2010s became a default formal language associated with specific visions of what a computationally designed futuristic architecture should look like.

What I find particularly exciting about the recent generative art movement is the vast variety of effects being produced. In contrast to the earlier wave of generative design in architecture that was characterized by an overuse of Voronoi algorithms and smooth parametrized surfaces, the visual landscape being crafted today is much more diverse and entropic. Meaning: There is no singular style associated with contemporary generative design. And that's a good thing.

Computational design does not require a specific visual language or style. Take, for example, a recent Art Blocks project titled *Free Plan* by the Turkish architect known as XNMTRC, a series of Miesian pavilion plans that explore its eponymous architectural concept. XNMTRC's project is an “on-chain” algorithm that generates unique plans according to modernist principles, resulting in compositions reminiscent of Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion and Farnsworth House. While outsiders to the discipline may regard the generated outputs as striking geometric compositions, architects arrive with disciplinary interpretations. In other words, *Free Plan* is a computational project that extends far beyond computational interpretation. From an academic perspective, *Free Plan* contributes to a larger dialogue that entwines



Free Plan by XNMTRC generates a series of Miesian pavilions and offers them as NFTs.

both architectural and computational history and theory (think Mies meets Vera Molnár). From a techno-economic perspective, it fits provocatively into debates around labor and automation in architectural design.

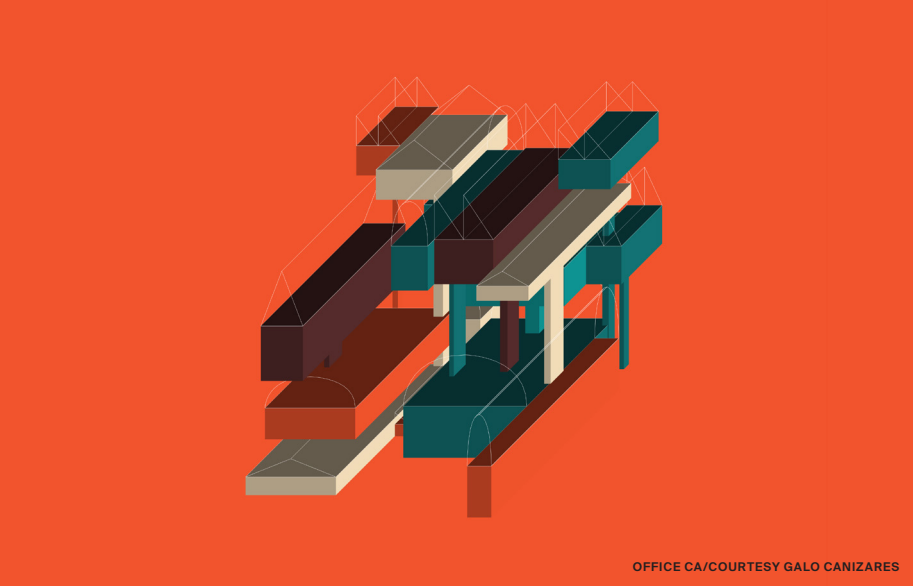
Free Plan also illustrates how drawings and images can hold speculative value in the tradition of “paper architecture,” resurrecting a prior art market interest in architectural drawings. Similar to OMA selling Madelon Vriesendorp paintings for extra income in the 1970s, some architects may now be able to market their media to a wider audience. The current price, for example, of one iteration of *Free Plan* on the secondary market is 0.2 Ethereum or ~\$500. The advent of NFT technology has allowed artists whose medium is primarily digital to sell and distribute their work just like physical media artists. This, in turn, has catalyzed a renewed interest in generative art as a commodity evidenced by the emergence of Art Blocks and other blockchain-based generative art platforms. This year's Venice Art Biennale even established a Decentral Art Pavilion, which hosted works from several prominent generative artists.

While volatile market speculation around art has always existed, and architects have at times benefited from an art market that values architectural media, it is possible that what the current generative art and broader digital art movement offers us is new perspectives on algorithmic collaboration. These do not have to be solely technical; they could be conceptual, theoretical, economic, or cultural. I personally have had a few fascinating debates online with artists surrounding retrograde aesthetics in emerging artworks. In these conversations we discussed why, for instance, some generative projects use nostalgic effects such as artificial grain in code-based images or why some artists insist on reproducing hand-drawn ef-

fects. As somewhat of an outsider to the world of generative art history, I have learned from both curators and artists, and this, in turn, has affected how I approach generative design.

It is easy to get seduced by the striking and imaginative imagery coming out of NFT generative art platforms. But it is important to understand that these artists have been working through this medium long before it was trendy—and long before it was financially viable. Generative art is an autonomous discipline with its own history and cultural values. At times those values align with those of architects, and fruitful collaborations can emerge. Architects could also learn something about generosity from the current wave of generative art. The generosity of coders, programmers, artists, and technologists who make their knowledge freely available is abundant in these growing communities. It has led to record donations to the Processing Foundation, which supports coding camps for students, fellowships for artists and researchers, and, of course, development of the Processing tools. Programming has become much more accessible thanks to this generosity, whereas architecture remains a highly exclusive and often inaccessible body of knowledge. Perhaps the takeaway here is neither purely visual nor formal nor technical: These developments offer lessons in sharing expertise as well as opening previously exclusive knowledge to wider audiences.

Galo Canizares is a designer, writer, and educator currently researching the socio-technical networks of relations between design's softwarization and the architectural imagination. He is the author of *Digital Fabrications: Designer Stories for a Software-Based Planet*, a collection of essays on software and design.



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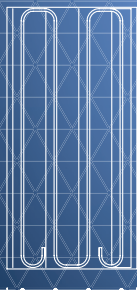
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